



Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond
March 6 – 13, 2014

Table of Contents

The following news stories are divided into the following sections.

Aboriginal Arts & Culture	2
Aboriginal Business & Finance	33
Aboriginal Community Development	40
Aboriginal Crime & Justice	44
Aboriginal Education & Youth	52
Aboriginal Health	58
Aboriginal Identity & Representation	75
Aboriginal Inequality & Poverty	88
Aboriginal Jobs & Labour	92
Aboriginal Politics	97
Aboriginal Sports	105
Energy, the Environment & Natural Resources	107
Land Claims & Treaty Rights	117
Special Topic: Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women	134
Special Topic: International Indigenous Populations	145

Aboriginal Arts & Culture

Inuit art evolving to include contemporary themes, printmaker says

“You can’t just keep on repeating the same old, same old”

DAVID MURPHY,
March 06, 2015 - 8:29 am



"How We Dress," a new work by Shuvinai Ashoona, was printed by hand at Studio PM in partnership with the West Baffin Co-Op. Prints cost \$750 with \$600 going to the Kenojuak Ashevak Memorial Fund which supports arts scholarships for young aspiring Inuit. (PHOTO COURTESY OF STUDIO PM)

Nunavut is a complex place defined by more than just clichés like polar bears and sealskins. The same goes for Inuit art.

Master printmaker Paul Machnik says it’s time for printmaking in Nunavut to evolve beyond the iconic and traditional Kenojuak Ashevak-style we so often see represented in galleries worldwide.

“You can’t just keep on repeating the same old, same old. Not to put it down, but you need to move on,” Machnik said at the Canadian Guild of Crafts in Montreal after his lecture there on printmaking, Feb. 28.

That means going from pretty animals on the tundra to depicting current issues Inuit face today.

And if anyone has the credibility to call for a new era in Inuit printmaking, it’s Machnik.

He's hosted printmaking workshops in Cape Dorset and around Nunavut since the mid-1990s and owns his own art studio in Montreal called Studio PM.

In fact, he was a fan of Ashevak decades before he started on his life's goal of helping revive the art of printmaking in the Eastern Arctic.

"When he was a boy he saw a little stamp of Kenojuak [Ashevak]," said Machnik's partner Bess Muhlstock.

"It was the [Enchanted Owl](#). And he kept that stamp in a little box. And he always thought he would want to work with the Inuit," Muhlstock said.

Turns out that little boy was right.

Machnik now helps fill the annual Cape Dorset print collection with about 10 to 15 prints per year which he gathers during northern trips sponsored, in part, by the West Baffin Co-operative and Cape Dorset Fine Arts in Toronto.

On Feb. 28, Machnik told a crowd of 35 Montrealers about his most recent workshop in Cape Dorset, one that lasted two-and-a-half weeks.

"When I go up, I'm like a bit of a rabbit running around with my head cut off — to the homes of the artists, to the atelier," he told the crowd during the lecture.

Machnik helped more than a dozen artists etch metal plates for their prints. What follows is a long process of proofing, assessing and colouring before the prints make it into the annual collection.

It's clear from his presentation that Machnik passionately supports Inuit artists who depict modern day subject matter, not just those traditional symbols.

"If we don't allow the Inuit to speak about what is really going on, we are keeping them in that framework of the good old days. Which isn't really true," Machnik said.

Machnik points to works from [Shuvina Ashoona](#) as an example of a new era in Inuit art.

One of Ashoona's most recent works, called "How We Dress," shows two women — one in an amauti and another in an Islamic burka.

Another shows a man behind bars in a courtroom, staring toward a judge and a Canadian flag, with his family in the background.

But collectors love the look of traditional Inuit art. Those in the business know that's what draws crowds to galleries which display the annual Cape Dorset print collection.

And that means fewer opportunities to showcase experimental, contemporary subject matter and limited incentives for the artists themselves.

Producing prints also costs much more than it did 50 or 60 years ago, which doesn't help younger, often financially strapped artists, Machnik said.

Galleries should start selecting and supporting more contemporary Inuit art which is now starting to trickle out of Nunavut, and new, younger artists as well, he added.

"There are galleries that would be interested. So why are we limited to these select group of galleries?"

One solution is for galleries to promote artists to an international audience, Machnik said. Trade shows and cultural centres are ideal venues for showcasing contemporary prints as well.

Diana Perera, an Inuit art specialist with the Canadian Guild of Crafts, said she'd love to see more contemporary themes in northern artworks.

"Sometimes it is put into an ethnic box," Perera said.

Galleries have a responsibility to nurture this new era in Inuit art, she said, "to let people know the changes, the advances, how things have changed, the new work coming out of the North."



Peter Machnik speaks to a crowd of 35 people Feb. 28 about his recent printmaking workshop in Cape Dorset which occurred earlier in February. (PHOTO BY DAVID MURPHY)

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674inuit_art_evolution_to_include_contemporary_themes_says_printmaker/

The Soundtrack of Canada's Complicated Aboriginal History

Op-Eds

By [Lance Scott Walker](#)

This article originally appeared on [Noisey Canada](#).



Photo courtesy of Light in the Attic

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, political activism in the United States and Canada brought with it a heightened awareness of Native American issues. The Civil Rights Movement was a catalyst (groups like Minneapolis's American Indian Movement were even modeled after the Black Panthers), as was the Vietnam War, which stirred up dust everywhere by sending 82,000 Native Americans into service and around 50,000 Americans across the border into Canada to avoid the draft. Native rights groups formed all over North America during this era, boosting their visibility through their own media outlets and events like the Alcatraz Island occupation of 1969, the Trail Of Broken Treaties cross-country march in 1972, and the 71-day police standoff the following year at Wounded Knee, South Dakota.

While American Indian Movement voices like Russell Means (of Lakota descent), Madonna Thunder Hawk (Oohenumpa), and Leonard Peltier (Anishinabe-Dakota) drew plenty of attention to what was going on in the States, Canada had its own set of affairs. Civil Rights had made integration a reality, but for a lot of Aboriginal Canadians, that amounted to assimilation. Indian Termination policies in the United States had a parallel in Canada's residential school system (designed to erase Native customs and languages), and long-running conflicts like the 1969 White Paper (eliminating Native status) and environmental concerns surrounding the 1971 James Bay hydroelectric project

highlighted the adversarial nature of relations between Aboriginals and the Canadian government.

These issues were some of many being addressed by the voices of an underground music culture in Canada. Duke Redbird, an Ojibway poet from Ontario's Saugeen First Nation reserve who came up in Toronto's Yonge Street folk scene of the early '60s (living in the same boarding house as Joni Mitchell) said, "The American experience at that time was caught up in the early days of the '60s to 1970 with the Vietnam war. And of course, Canada wasn't involved in that. So as a result, the Canadian experience was a lot different. There were a lot of the draft dodgers of the day that came to Canada at that time and brought their American experience with them, and it filtered into the music. It was an integrated connection that was positive all around."

In his collaborations with Ojibway singer-songwriter Curtis Johnnie (a.k.a. Shingoose), Redbird was part of a folk circuit that had been spreading across the provinces through coffeehouses and Native Friendship Centres for years by that point. The walls of the Canadian mainstream had been broken down in the '60s by Aboriginal artists such as Buffy Sainte-Marie (Cree), Robbie Robertson (Mohawk) of The Band, filmmaker/artist Alanis Obomsawin (Abenaki), and Willie Dunn (Mi'kmaq/Scottish-Irish), and artists like Willie Thrasher, Lawrence Martin and Morley Loon gained provincial popularity, but there was a whole swath of artists making records and touring who weren't as visible, and whose legacies have nearly been lost.



Photo courtesy of Willie Dunn

The Seattle-based label Light In The Attic seeks to remedy that, partnering with Vancouver-based DJ, writer, and Canadian music historian Kevin "Sipreano" Howes for the 3-LP set [*Native North America \(Vol. 1\): Aboriginal Folk, Rock & Country, 1966 – 1985*](#). That range of dates represents nothing more specific than the years in which the recordings Howes collected for this compilation were made, but 34 songs spread out over two decades also reflects the scarcity of the recordings.

“Part of the motivation for the work,” Howes said, “Was wanting to find out information about these artists, and looking online, looking in books, and not being able to find that information. You have to go right to the source. So I had to track them down. They live all over different parts of Canada, and one of the artists from this comp is from Alaska as well, but it was a process of finding the artists and trying to get some of this history down. It is time sensitive. The artists are getting older, and we’re losing some. Like Willie Dunn — one of the prominent artists from that era — passed away during the making of this project.”

Willie Dunn looms large here even in death as he was revered across Canada for the stories he told in his songs about Native cultures. In 1968, Dunn made a film called *The Ballad of Crowfoot* for the National Film Board of Canada, which brought widespread acclaim to the Montreal native and a new focus on the Aboriginal situation. Howes remembers being shown that film in high school, and finding himself drawn back into Dunn's story years later as a record collector.

"He was part of the Canadian army at one point," Howes explained. "He went to the Congo as a relief soldier, and he said he put down his gun and picked up a guitar once he came back to Canada. But he used his guitar as a peaceful weapon, in teaching people and inspiring people. Willie Dunn was a huge inspiration to Indigenous people in North America and around the world. He made people feel proud to be of Native descent, and he shared stories based on the history of Native peoples in North America, and he really resonated with people of all backgrounds. He was a true legend, and he received some acclaim, but he never was able to break through."

The folk festivals of the '60s and '70s stoked the careers of many of these artists, but there was plenty of music being made in outlying communities that lacked access to recording studios. Then the CBC stepped in. Howes said, “12 of the 34 songs were recorded by the CBC — the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, our national broadcaster here in Canada — as part of their mandate to record Canadian talent and Indigenous talent, something that unfortunately, because of government cutbacks to the CBC, does not exist today. These recordings were only for broadcast play, and on top of that only regional broadcast play. The songs of Sikumiut or Sugluk weren’t played in Vancouver on the CBC stations. They’d be played in the Arctic, though. Most of these artists were and still are recognized in their communities and reserves across Canada. They just didn’t have the opportunity to cross over into the great Canadian conscious and our greater cultural fabric.”

Inuk artist Willie Thrasher, who started playing music in the Northwest Territories in the late '60s and now busks in the town of Nanaimo on Vancouver Island with his partner Linda Saddleback, said, “The CBC put together some eight performances from across Canada, and I was chose as one of them! And the only reason why I was chosen — I remember the time that I was playing with The Cordells, and an old man came to our table and he sat down and he said, ‘Why don’t you write songs about your ways of living?’ At the time, I was living at the residential school, and the residential school took my ways of living — hunting, trapping, everything — away, and I was forced to stay away from my mom and dad 10 months out of the year for about 12 years. When that old

man told us that, I didn't know nothing, and this old man knew a lot about our culture! That's when, for the first time in my life, I started realizing who I was inside. I am an Inuvialuit. My people used to live this way before. And that's how I got interested in writing Inuit music. I started hearing stories that the elders were scared to talk about. The Christianity got to them so good that they were afraid to talk. They were proud to talk about it, but they were hiding it. They were scared that if the missionaries found out, they would give them hell and everything, eh?"

The residential school system removed Indigenous children from their homes once they reached school age, placing them in a Christian school where their hair would be cut short and their languages and customs discouraged. In the early 1950s, that was what happened to Thrasher.

"They took me when I was five years old," he recalled. "I had long hair and I spoke a little bit of Inuktitut here and there. And then every time I spoke my language or think of my ways or anything like that, I would get strapped or put in a corner or put on detention. They made sure that I didn't learn much of my traditional ways. While I was in the residential school, they were made to take everything away from me, and not keep our culture in our mind — to put us in a new environment."

Canada's last residential school shuttered in 1998, but its legacy drags on for the people of the communities affected. To protect those lost histories, some of these artists have shifted towards working with institutions around the country to expand what they did as musicians. For the last five years, Cree songwriter Lloyd Cheechoo has worked for the Cree Native Arts & Crafts Association as their Executive Director, Lawrence Martin served as mayor of two different Canadian towns and is currently the grand chief of Moose Factory's Mushkegowuk Council, and Duke Redbird has been speaking on Native issues for decades, at one time as president of the Ontario Métis and Non-status Indian Association, and as vice-president of the Native Council of Canada, representing Métis and non-status Aboriginals whose treaty rights have been restricted by the Canadian government. All three have found a voice outside of their creative lives, working towards resolving issues that have plagued Aboriginals for centuries.

"Our lands were never legitimately taken over," said Redbird. "At least in the United States, one of the legitimate ways you can take over somebody's territory is by conquest. And of course, that happened in the United States. But in Canada, we never had a conquest. There were no wars. The British certainly didn't purchase the land from us, and they didn't make treaties with us. They just moved a lot of people in, took over, and then took jurisdiction. So these issues are still with us today. And they're quite different from the American Indian experience. Similar in some places, but different enough that we had a kind of special message that we were getting out that wasn't as political I would say. We were just seeking justice, and we were pointing out that it was possible, if people could learn to get along."

Cheechoo grew up at the southern tip of James Bay in Moosonee, listening to rock 'n roll in Moose Factory Island dance halls and the fiddle music that had been brought to James

Bay by Scottish fur traders centuries before. Cheechoo wrote "Winds Of Change" as a historical homage to the first sighting of European ships in James Bay. The resulting marriage of traditions turned out to have a particular relevance for Cheechoo.



Photo courtesy of Shingoose and Duke Redbird.

"My dad is a master fiddler," he said, "and he learned from my grandfather. When my grandfather Noah was a young man in the early 1900s, he worked on these ships. There's an island off the coast of Quebec and Ontario where the Hudson Bay ships will dock and they unload. They had big warehouses. And my grandfather would say, 'When we finish unloading this, there's some rum,' at the end of the evening, and the sailors would have fiddles and start fiddling. That's where he picked up the fiddling music."

Those traditions are alive and well. James and Daisy Cheechoo recently recorded an album and performed at the Orkney festival in Aberdeen, Scotland, and their son's contributions to the musical legacy of James Bay are saddled in its history. "James Bay," and "Winds Of Change" both appear here and on the 1981 World Records album *Goose Wings: The Music Of James Bay* (with Lawrence Martin, Roger House, Brian Davey, Otterhead Drum, Norman Naveau, and Lloyd's brother Vern) as a nod to the nature and traditions around James Bay in danger of going away.

"They had these drums, these various types of drums," Cheechoo recalled of music he heard growing up. "They have the hunter's drum, and the hunter would sing a song, like a chant. I couldn't make out the words. It was their own personal song to seek a vision where the animals could be for the fall, because they migrated, and they migrated with the animals. So a hunter would sing a song, and then after he was done, he would say, 'We're gonna go over here. That's where we're gonna go.' The other ones were social dances, or different types of events would occur where they would sing chanting songs. There's lots of a capellas. The woman would sing lullabies — children's, working lullabies — so that was passed down. Some of them kinda disappeared. After a while the Christian movement came and some of the activity was forbidden to do, I guess."

Musically, the folk, rock, and country on *Native North America (Vol. 1)* draws from Canadian heavyweights like Neil Young, Gordon Lightfoot, Buffy Sainte-Marie, and Leonard Cohen, with streaks of Hank Williams, Bob Dylan, and Johnny Cash. But there

are any number of traditional sounds at work within that, from chants to pow wow drums and a cross section of some Native dialects still spoken across Canada.

A leader of the Innu folk movement of the 1970s, Quebec native Philippe McKenzie formed Groupe Folklorique Montagnais in 1977 with Bernard Fontaine and fellow Innu Florent Vollant. Their song ["Tshekuan Mak Tshetutamak" \("What To Do?"\)](#) is one of the brightest moments on this compilation, with acoustic guitars strumming up big, uplifting chords over the pulse of a shaker and a frame drum. Most notably, McKenzie sings in his Innu-aimun language, a decision inspired by Cree singer and actor Morley Loon (1948–1986), a songwriter and actor who celebrated Indigenous cultures and stressed the importance of keeping Native tongues and traditions alive in his music. Before his death in 1986, he also formed and toured with the short-lived but much lauded group Red Cedar with Willie Thrasher, Robert Hall, Nilak, and Heiltsuk artist Mia Hunt.

Some of these artists played seemingly small but crucial roles in Canada's Aboriginal music history, like Sudbury, Ontario native Eric Landry, who took up music in the '50s and only ever released one song commercially. But that song, "Out Of The Blue," for many people perfectly contextualized the Aboriginal experience: "All you late settlers in this land / Driving your wisdom down the street / You're missing points cause you ain't been / to Canada yet."

That sentiment towards colonialism is echoed by the "Elvis Of The North," Cree singer-songwriter Ernest Monias. In "Tormented Soul," the Manitoba native sings: "My sky was blue, and my nights were still / My eyes were true, but thieves you came to kill / My waters were clean, my forests were green and high / You were so mean, you left me here to die, to die."

Some of these artists had dry spells, some all but disappeared, and others still never stopped working. Some were located in communities that were so remote they were only accessible by plane, and yet in towns all over the country they were tuning in to radio signals from rock 'n roll stations in places as far away as Nashville and West Virginia. In fact, the reach of *Native North America (Vol. 1)* extends into the streets of Fairbanks, Alaska, to the haunting caterwaul of Eskimo songwriter John Angaiak, whose "Hey, Hey, Hey Brother" and "I'll Rock You To The Rhythm Of The Ocean" explore Yup'ik family dynamics and the Aboriginal traditions with which he was raised. On his 1971 album *I'm Lost In The City*, Angaiak sings half the album in English and half in Yup'ik, with the influence of his native dialect evident even in the English songs, both in his pronunciations and the idiosyncratic turns in his melodies. Angaiak's are standout moments here, infused with a loneliness no doubt drawn from his time spent fighting in Vietnam — an experience representative of the diverse life stories herein.

Peter Frank (1941–1981) was a Mi'kmaq from Wagmatcook First Nation reserve in Nova Scotia whose residential school system past and subsequent career as a bush pilot factored heavily into the songs he wrote about his people. Lil'wat Nation member Gordon Dick tried to run away from a residential school three different times before picking up music, and was working as a tour guide for a summer camp in British Columbia when the

CBC showed up to shoot a documentary and chose him to do the music. Alexis Utatnaq (Inuit, singing in Inuktitut), has been playing concerts across Canada since the early '70s, never having left his day job as an interpreter/translator. Leland Bell (Anishinabe), from the Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve on Manitoulin Island in Lake Huron, is actually better known as a visual artist. Working throughout his music career at a printing plant, Bell began writing his own material after being inspired by the music of Willie Dunn.



Photo courtesy of William Tagoona

There are testaments to longevity in Cree Edwin Quinney and his Alberta surf-rock group Saddle Lake Drifting Cowboys, who formed in the late '70s and appeared at weddings, banquets, churches, and sobriety functions all the way until 1994. Starting back in 1971, William Tagoona (Inuit) was employed in Montreal as a translator for the Federal Government, which eventually got him writing songs in his native Inuktitut language. He worked for the CBC as a radio personality and reporter through 2012.

The darkest related story goes back to 1969, when Willy Mitchell (Mohawk-Algonquin) was shot in the head by a Quebec police officer at the age of 15 after becoming involved with the theft of some Christmas lights. While Mitchell was in the hospital, his brothers and cousins staged a protest by holding up a local watering hole full of old men, only to find their hostages sympathetic.

"There was about 10 guys there with .30-30s," Mitchell said. "The police had barricades on both ends of the street and there was police on the roof. And the chief of police came to the bar there and he showed his hands and he said, 'I'm unarmed. I wanna come in and talk to you.' So they let him in, and he told them, 'Nobody's gonna be charged for this. You can keep your guns and nobody will be charged. There's no one out takin' license plates or nothing. You can just go home. That's all we want. We're sorry this happened.' And so everybody went home. The old men were clapping and yelling."

Rounding it out, James Bay area Cree singer-songwriters Brian Davey and Lawrence Martin also represent Moose Factory Island, and the Edmonton country group The Chieftones, who formed in 1964, contribute a track from before they left for a second act in Nashville in the '70s.

"Different regions had different bands who were celebrated," Howes said. "Sugluk and Sikumiut in Nunavik region for example. But overall, best known on the non-Native folk fest circuit were Willie Dunn, Shingoose, Duke Redbird, and David Campbell. Morley Loon was more known in Native music circles, and was influential as someone who wrote and sang in the Cree language. Willie Thrasher and Willy Mitchell were there too. Philippe McKenzie is a pivotal figurehead to Innu people."

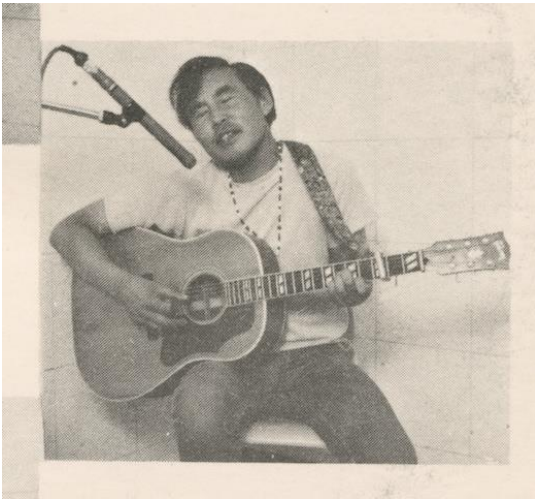


Photo courtesy of John Angaiak

Omnipresent in the liner notes are stars like Buffy Sainte-Marie and filmmaker Alanis Obomsawin, both of whom are idols and mentors to many artists on this compilation, but there are no musical offerings from female artists. Howes said it's unfortunately representative of the era.

"I really wrestled with the absence of women on the comp, but ultimately I wanted to present the strongest material available. Buffy is already well known and celebrated, and Alanis was unavailable to work on this project. There's no doubt it was a male-dominated scene, but you never know what can surface in the future."

Redbird chalks it up to the fact that Native women were playing music, but not on the folk circuit, and that in itself was a product of reservations and residential school oppression.

"One of the things that people forget is that we didn't have access to musical instruments," he said. "The women chanted and they drummed, but it wasn't the kind of music that you would expect on the folk circuit. In order to play a musical instrument, you have to have access to musical instruments, and on reserves, we just didn't have that. Occasionally, the guys would be working and they'd be able to purchase a guitar and learn on their own, but there were not banjos or ukuleles. This kind of thing just wasn't available. Since then, of course, we do have quite a few Native women who are excellent singers and songwriters and musicians. But in those days — we're talking back in the '60s, that's 50 years ago — you have to understand what reserve life was like and where our young people have come from. Residential schools considered any kind of music that wasn't a hymn to be of the devil! These were church-run schools of the worst sort. You can't imagine the kind of repression and brutality and horror that these places were, and certainly women or young girls weren't encouraged to take up a musical instrument or anything like that. And that was the generation that was emerging from very deep repression. It wasn't like the South where they could sing work songs. This was not even allowed in Native communities. You know that our songs and our dances and our culture

were forbidden by law?"



Photo courtesy of Lloyd Cheechoo

Things have been different for female artists in the decades since this compilation was recorded. The Juno Award for Aboriginal Album of the Year, created in 1993 (Lawrence Martin, a.k.a. Wapistan, won the inaugural award), each year recognizes the best recordings of Canadian Aboriginal musicians. Buffy Sainte-Marie and Susan Aglukark have each won twice, and Elisapie Isaac, Mishi Donovan, Leela Gilday, and Crystal Shawanda have also taken home the prize. In 2014 and 2015, three of the five nominees for the prize were female.

Internet searches on a lot of these artists won't turn up much, making *Native North America (Vol. 1)* a previously nonexistent link between these decades-lost artists and their now-scattered fan bases, and new methods of communication have brought new fans.

There is no better example of that than David Campbell, who was born to an Arawak Amerindian father and Portuguese-Guyanese mother in what was then-British colonial Guyana. He grew up living under a thatched roof home on the banks of the Pomeroon River, migrating in his early 20s to Canada and crossing paths at the Village Corner in Toronto with country trailblazers like Ian and Sylvia Tyson before running off to England in 1966. It was there that Campbell would establish a successful recording career, releasing four albums on three different labels between 1966 and 1972. Returning to Toronto in the '70s, he made a new connections.

"When I came back, one of the first things I did was to check out the Native scene there, and meet up with Native people. And then I began singing at Native events there, and I'm happy to report that I was very beautifully accepted by the Native people of Canada. And in my own mind, I didn't see any reason why I shouldn't be. Not because of me, but because I don't see any barriers between us. Wherever we may come from in the Americas, I don't see there should be any division. That held true, and so I began to take

part in things Native in Canada to a large extent over many years, and became part of the Native performing scene in Canada."

Campbell no longer tours today, preferring instead to communicate with his fan base through the YouTube channel he maintains from his home in Vancouver. Still alive in his work are themes protecting disappearing Native storytelling traditions, something that Campbell addressed in 1978 with "[Sky-Man And The Moon](#)," and contextualization of the contemporary Aboriginal experience, which he did the year before with "Pretty Brown."

"It still applies," Campbell said of the song. "I think there was a reason for writing it, and that reason still pertains. It's a funny thing about songs. You write songs for a lot of certain central reasons, and then also some auxiliary reasons, and in 'Pretty Brown,' obviously there was a central reason for writing that. The beauty of Native people needed to be expressed."

In the era since the years documented on *Native North America (Vol. 1)*, newer generations are picking up the same torches through poetry and hip-hop, and they're channeling old themes.

"There's still the destruction of the environment, corporate dominance, oppression," Howes said. "The same issues that the artists were writing about in the '60s, '70s, and '80s."

"Art, dance, and music existed before civilization," Redbird said. "It's part of our DNA. It's embedded in the very fabric of who we are as human beings. And the music and spoken word acoustic world was the world that human beings lived in for two and a half million years before writing came along, so it's all a part of what represents ourselves as humans. It makes sense that these themes continue to be expressed and addressed, because with all our technology, and all the progress we think we've made, we still haven't really improved on the poverty in the world and the crime in the world and the wars in the world. And all of the things that our generation in the '60s was addressing, this young generation of the Millennials are talking about it today! I go out on stage with these young Millennial spoken word artists, and my poems and their poems are talking about the same issues."

[Lance Scott Walker](#) is a New York-based writer. He is the author of the books *Houston Rap* and *Houston Rap Tapes*.

Direct Link: <http://noisey.vice.com/blog/the-soundtrack-of-canadas-complicated-aboriginal-history>

Storyteller passes on Cree culture through children's book

'Honouring the Buffalo' written in English with Cree translation

Reported by **Adriana Christianson**

First Posted: Mar 7, 2015 4:39pm | Last Updated: Mar 7, 2015 4:42pm

Just as their ancestors had done, the children sit at the feet of an elder speaking in Cree with a story about honouring buffalo.

Except these children are hearing the story in a shiny new gymnasium, not next to a campfire under the stars. The story is being shared through a new book intended to help children understand the Cree language.

"You must always honour the buffalo because they gave us life," elder Ray Lavalee told a group of students at Seven Stones Community School in Regina.

"Remember where you come from, that is how you know who you are," he tells the children before beginning a traditional Cree prayer.

He is the storyteller behind a new children's book 'Honouring the Buffalo: A Plains Cree Legend' written by Judith Silverthorne and illustrated by Mike Keepness. The book is special because it is written in English with a Cree translation.

Lavalee's words echo a Cree storytelling tradition passed on to him by his grandmother. He worries there are very few people left who can tell those stories when he is gone, because he knows Salteaux and Cree.

He says if First Nations youth don't learn their own culture and their own language they risk losing their identity.



Children's author Judith Silverthorne reads to students at Seven Stones Community School

Author Judith Silverthorne collaborated closely with Lavalee to translate the oral tradition into writing for a children's book. Reading the story aloud to the students at Seven Stones was special because she went to Wascana School as a girl.

On one page Silverthorne stopped to invite a student to help her tell the story. Thirteen-year-old Sierra Dubois smiled nervously as she stepped up to the podium.

In her hands, Dubois held a crumpled note with the phonetic spelling of the Cree words she has studied in class. She stumbles only once, but grins with pride at the end. That pride extends to learning not only her language, but also her heritage and understanding of the significance of the buffalo.

"I know that it's a sacred animal and that we should honour it because it sacrificed itself for us," she said. "The buffalo is a really special animal. It's one of the most historic animals of First Nations people."

Dubois says she was impressed to hear the story because it tells the truth about how the First Nations people survived by using every part of the buffalo.



Original illustrations for Honouring the Buffalo by Mike Keepness

Mike Keepness stands quietly by a table in the gym featuring his original paintings of buffalo roaming free on the prairies.

"I have sold more paintings of buffalo than anything else," he explains. "In a funny way, I guess the bison is still putting food on the table."

As a member of the Pasqua First Nation band, Keepness shares his Saulteaux and Cree heritage with Lavalee. He considers it a great honour to help pass on a part of his own cultural heritage that he feels he missed out on when he was growing up.

"When I was a young boy, my grandmother was teaching me Saulteaux so I could communicate with her," he said. "But somewhere along the lines I lost that and, in a sad way, I lost some of the culture and the teachings."

Working as a youth mentor in North Central Regina, Keepness sees what that loss of identity and culture can do to people.

"A lot of people have lost their culture and the teachings and the language, and to be a little part of that educational process -- I'm very grateful," Keepness explained.

His three children go to a different school, but they each took one copy of the book to present to their teachers.

"They were so proud to see daddy on the cover," he said smiling.

Direct Link: <http://cjme.com/story/storyteller-passes-cree-culture-through-childrens-book/539861>

Warpath Tour brings message of aboriginal pride to Saskatoon

Aboriginal hip hop concert showcasing some of Saskatoon and Canada's top artists

Reported by **Kelly Malone**

First Posted: Mar 8, 2015 10:31am | Last Updated: Mar 9, 2015 7:53am

When Jeremiah Manitopies grabs his microphone on the stage in Saskatoon Wednesday, it won't just be a showcase of skills; it will also be his homecoming.

The Plains Cree-Saulteau hip hop artist, known as [Drezus](#), got his start on the streets of the bridge city.

"That's my hometown, I was born in St. Paul's (hospital)," Drezus said. "That's where my family is from, a big chunk of my family is out there."

Known for his time on the Much Music charts with the group Team Rezofficial, his Aboriginal Music Awards nominations and his solo work, including the most recent album *Indian Summer*, Drezus said life didn't start easily.

"I used to look at the negative a lot and I wouldn't even be thinking about music too much. It was just about how I could get paid, how I could get money, there wasn't a connection to the people," he said.

Eventually his family relocated, and Drezus started to head down an even more

dangerous path. He even had a stint in jail before he connected with his First Nations heritage and turned it all around.

"I'm definitely a new person," he said. "I think coming back, I've learned a lot more about myself, my people and where I come from. I hope to connect with the people in a positive way."

That change made its way into his music. Drezus began rhyming about Aboriginal issues including Idle No More and treaty rights. He started incorporating traditional sounds into his beats.

"To me, we are all native people on this earth and drums connect us all, so at the very basics of hip hop is a drum pattern, and I think we all just gravitate towards that," he said.

Using the universal drum beat, Drezus has been touring across Canada spreading his message, specifically to young Aboriginal people who he sees himself in. On top of shows, Drezus also speaks at youth centres and young offenders facilities.

"My focus is to turn around and focus on my people and kind of instill pride amongst us. Show them no matter how hard it gets, if you keep working at it, keep your family in mind, your values intact, you can really make something happen. It's just hard work and dedication," he said. "With Warpath, I speak about the warrior spirit and just breaking through any negative feelings or doubts and giving it all you got."

The message of First Nation's pride is also at the heart of Tara Campbell's music. The Saskatoon-based rapper, mother and wife has always had the beat of the hip hop drum rumbling in her heart.

"I grew up northern Saskatchewan in a smaller town... I had very little access to any kind of music. Basically, I would get a chance to hit up the RadioShack or if you were lucky hit the city and go to Sam the Record Man," she said with a laugh. "I picked up whatever I could by judging how the cover of the album looked... One of the few ones I bought myself was Naughty by Nature and Salt-N-Pepa."

Seeing these women rhyme and command a room inspired Campbell, also known as [T-Rhyme](#), to test her own skills.

"I knew in my heart that this is what I love. Deep down no matter what, it will always be there. That's what hip hop was to me," she said.

Once T-Rhyme moved to live with her dad, who she describes as "proud Cree", she realized the power hip hop could have in understanding First Nation's identity.

"So once I started to grasp 'this is who I am,' I thought how can I work this sense of pride in there where I am carrying this with me everywhere," she said. "It came out a lot in my writing and in my poetry."

With the recent national roundtable looking at nearly 1,200 missing and murdered women in Canada, T-Rhyme said it's even more important for indigenous girls to see powerful and strong First Nation's women in the media and music world in order to not define themselves as victims.

"We don't have too many faces that are on TV programs or in the mainstream where you can tell it's a visible First Nations woman," she said. "I just feel like that's a little bit of my job to jump in there and be like 'listen up girls that are in the far remote areas of northern Saskatchewan or North West Territories, I'm one of your faces now. See me, see what I'm capable of doing, and turn around and do that yourself too. You can be anything you can possibly dream of.'"

The [Warpath Tour](#) Saskatoon stop is on Wednesday at Vangelis Tavern.



Tara Campbell (T-Rhyme). Provided

Direct Link: <http://cjme.com/story/warpath-tour-brings-message-aboriginal-pride-saskatoon/539964>

Arctic food lovers pack the house for Inuit org event

"Inuit culture is not exotic. It is Canadian culture"

LISA GREGOIRE, March 11, 2015 - 7:10 am



Sealskin models wait for their cue offstage at ITK's annual A Taste of the Arctic celebration of northern foods and culture. (PHOTO BY LISA GREGOIRE)



Herb Nakimayak, of Inuit Circumpolar Council-Canada, said the fish dishes made him think of his home in Paulatuk, NWT. (PHOTO BY LISA GREGOIRE)



ITK President Terry Audla and his partner Terri Lynn Potter, pose at the muskox photo booth at the March 10 A Taste of the Arctic event in Ottawa. Audla says he invited Don Cherry to attend the seal-friendly event but he declined. (PHOTO BY JIM BELL)



Salluit singer-songwriter Elisapie performs at ITK's Arctic food event March 10. (PHOTO BY JIM BELL)

OTTAWA — Herb Nakimayak is from Paulatuk in the Northwest Territories and if you want to know the truth, he's crazy about fish.

If you had to find him in a hurry on the evening of March 10, you only needed to stand near the fish and seafood platter at the lobby of the National Art Centre in Ottawa.

"I grew up on whitefish and char so for me, it brings back my younger days, when I was a teenager, trapping, the celebrations we'd have in the fall, sharing with the whole community," said Nakimayak, an executive member of Inuit Circumpolar Council-Canada.

"I was a trapper when I was 14 years old. Then I went to school. I'm really grateful for that, the opportunity to do both and be effective in both worlds. My kids will never get that opportunity."

There were a lot of stories about food circulating Tuesday night at A Taste of the Arctic, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami's fifth annual celebration of northern food, culture and entertainment. And stories of food often wind their way back to family.

Andy Pirti, Makivik Corp.'s treasurer, said he really liked the muskox burgers. When asked if he'd tried the maktaaq chicharrón — deep fried with a spicy vinegar dipping sauce — he smiled politely and then tried to answer politely, but kept closing his mouth instead.

"I had maktaaq last night, plain maktaaq," he said eventually, carefully sidestepping the question. When asked if it was better, he nodded.

Originally from Akulivik, he now lives in Montreal. Southern living provides better job opportunities and services, he says, "but at the same time, the landscapes of home — I miss the hunting grounds and the people, my family."

His eyes welled up a bit there. "You're going to make me all emotional now."

The evening saw its fair share of high heels, sexy dresses and seal skin vests. Anna Fowler, who works at ITK, looked fetching in a pair of sealskin leg warmers that zipped up the back of her calves over a pair of leather boots.

But if you could pull your eyes from the handsome crowd, there was plenty to put on your plate.

Hot chef stations offered carved caribou hip with Saskatoon berry sauce; seal jambalaya which had both seared chunks of seal *and* seal sausage on paprika rice; mini muskox burgers with sesame-soya mayo; and crêpes with chokecherry chutney, Labrador tea chantilly cream and salted caramel sauce.

As if that wasn't enough to make you ditch the diet, turn around and you'd find the aforementioned seafood platter, which had shrimp, mussels in the half shell and velvety Arctic clam chowder with pan-fried bannock.

A third table had finger foods: nikku (dried caribou) in a green lentil stew, seaweed rice wraps, pipsi (dried Arctic char) over a caper and fennel slaw and the maktaaq.

Once guests — who paid \$199 for this feast of food and drink — had been given a chance to sample what NAC Executive Chef John Morris had to offer, ITK president Terry Audla took to the stage to welcome everyone.

“This is Canadian cuisine at its finest — and I truly believe that these dishes could find a home on any fine dining menu in the country or around the world,” Audla said.

He then told the audience he had invited Don Cherry — the churlish NHL Coaches' Corner co-host who ridiculed colleague Ron MacLean for eating a seal burger in early February.

“Neither Cherry nor MacLean were able to attend,” he said. “That's unfortunate.”

“Seal meat is delicious and nourishing,” he continued. “Sealskin is beautiful and fashionable. Inuit culture is not exotic. It is Canadian culture. It is our culture — all of ours, everyone in this room.”

That drew a hearty round of applause.

Nunavik singer-songwriter Elisapie stepped up to the stage soon afterward with her two piece band, singing songs in English and Inuktitut, barefoot, in a clinging, full-length red dress.

Young models showed off modern coats and accessories during a sealskin fashion show which followed and then DJ Madeskimo provided beats for the after-party.

At that point, most people made their way back to the crêpe bar.



It was a thrill for the taste buds March 10 in Ottawa. Those attending this year's A Taste of the Arctic got to sample a wide array of chef-inspired country food cuisine made with muskox, fish, seafood and even caribou. (PHOTO BY LISA GREGOIRE)

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiagonline.ca/stories/article/65674arctic_food_lovers_pack_the_house_f_or_inuit_org_event/

First Nations fashion creations in the spotlight at Sudbury show

Cambrian College hosts event to give Aboriginal students opportunity to celebrate their culture: spokesperson

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 11, 2015 1:27 PM ET Last Updated: Mar 11, 2015 1:27 PM ET



Bruno Henry was one of three Aboriginal designers who took part in Tuesday's fashion show at Cambrian College in Sudbury. (Olivia Stefanovich/CBC)

Evening gowns, suits and leather creations dominated Cambrian College's first Aboriginal fashion show in Sudbury on Tuesday.

The event was meant to showcase the work of three Aboriginal designers living in northeastern Ontario, and to empower Aboriginal students.

Meagan Eshkawkogan said she took part in the event to boost her confidence. She joined more than a dozen student models strutting to the sound of the beat.

"I believe it builds up self-esteem, building up the energy just to model down a runway," she said.

Although Eshkawkogan was eager to strike a pose, the show's organizer, Rosalie Henderson, says not all Aboriginal students self-identify.



Cambrian College held its first Aboriginal fashion show in Sudbury on Tuesday and plans to hold another one next year. (Olivia Stefanovich/CBC)

"This is part of that identity campaign, right? We want students to identify, but we want them to be proud of their heritage ."

Henderson said the college held the event to give Aboriginal students the opportunity to celebrate their culture through art and dance.

One of the designers, Bruno Henry, makes stitched leather clothing and artwork.

Being Aboriginal in the fashion industry hasn't been easy, but he said it's worth it.

"It's been a struggle, but I continue to do it because I love doing it," he said.

"I love how it makes everyone feel when they see it [my creations] because it's something that they don't normally see anywhere."

Cambrian College plans to host another Aboriginal fashion show next year.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/sudbury/first-nations-fashion-creations-in-the-spotlight-at-sudbury-show-1.2990524>

The Fascinating Architecture Of Canada's Nunavut Territory

Text by [Stefanie Waldek](#)

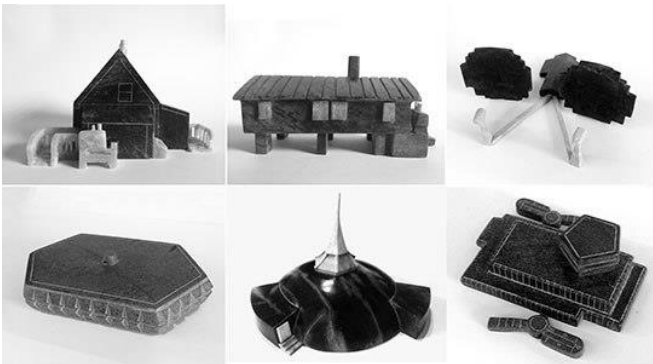
March 11, 2015



A photograph of the Gordon Robertson Educational Centre with architects Louis-Joseph Papineau, Guy Gerin-Lajoie, and Michel Robert LeBlanc, 1973.

Photo: Courtesy of Guy Gerin-Lajoie

First presented by Canada at the 2014 Venice Biennale for Architecture, the exhibition [“Arctic Adaptations: Nunavut at 15”](#) opened last week at the Winnipeg Art Gallery, marking the start of its national tour. The show celebrates the 15th anniversary of Nunavut—Canada’s northernmost and newest territory (it separated from the Northwest Territories in 1999) and explores its distinct architectural character.



A series of soapstone carvings by Inuit artists document key Nunavut buildings and typologies from the 20th century.

Photo: Courtesy of Lateral Office

Photography, topographical maps, and scale models carved by Inuit artisans examine the relationship between the 33,000 people of Nunavut and the climate and geography of the land, most of which is situated above the treeline in the Arctic Circle. Though the environment is harsh and fluctuates wildly between seasons, the Inuit people have inhabited the region for millennia, building structures that adapt to their surroundings. Today, new constructions blend Inuit traditions with modernist designs, creating a unique architectural aesthetic.



A detail of a design proposal with arctic balconies.
Photo: Courtesy of Sergio Pirrone

The exhibition also presents models of proposed architecture that represent the territory's future. Five teams, each composed of students or members of a Canadian school of architecture, a Canadian architecture firm, and a Nunavut-based organization, designed a structure for one of the following categories: housing, health, education, arts, and recreation.



Arctic Bay, an Inuit hamlet in Nunavut.
Photo: Courtesy of Bobby Kilabuk

*Through May 3 at Winnipeg Art Gallery, 300 Memorial Boulevard, Winnipeg, Manitoba;
wag.ca*

Direct Link: <http://www.architecturaldigest.com/blogs/daily/2015/03/arctic-adaptations-nunavut-canada>

Plight of aboriginal women inspires Kawennáhere Devery Jacobs's short film *Stolen*

[T'Cha Dunlevy, Montreal Gazette](#) [More from T'Cha Dunlevy, Montreal Gazette](#)

Published on: March 12, 2015

Last Updated: March 12, 2015 9:04 PM EDT



Kawennáhere Devery Jacobs in *Rhymes For Young Ghouls*. Now the Kahnawake native has stepped behind the camera to make a movie inspired by Tina Fontaine.

The Mohawk actress portrayed an aboriginal teen fighting the powers that be in Jeff Barnaby's reservation revenge epic *Rhymes for Young Ghouls*, and had a recurring role on last fall's APTN comedy *Mohawk Girls*.

She spent 2014 in New York City pursuing her acting career. Returning home in December, the Kahnawake native decided to step behind the camera for a cause that is close to her heart. Her coming short fiction film *Stolen* recounts the last 24 hours in the life of a 14-year-old aboriginal girl who runs away from a group home.

As of Thursday afternoon, Jacob's had raised nearly \$7,000 of the \$15,000 needed by March 29 to make the movie via a campaign on crowdfunding site [Kickstarter](#).

“I was inspired by (murdered Manitoba teen) Tina Fontaine,” she said. “She was the cause for a lot of inspiration across the indigenous community, and for a lot of non-native people. She was so young and her death was so preventable on behalf of the police. It’s really frustrating.

“I felt a responsibility to make this film, because I had the means and because of my experience working at the Native Women’s Shelter of Montreal. It combines my passion for this issue with my love for and experience in film.”

Social issues have always been close to Jacobs’s heart. She finished a degree in youth and adult correctional intervention at John Abbott College before her stint in New York.

Making the leap to writing and directing her own project is a natural evolution, she explained, even if it comes with a whole new set of things to think about. She has already enlisted Rhymes for Young Ghouls cinematographer Michel St-Martin; but there is much left to do.

“It’s really nerveracking,” Jacobs said, “in the best way possible. I could definitely get used to being in control of telling my own story. It’s a lot less unreliable than the acting side of the industry. It’s really exciting to create this idea and see it all come together.

“The driving force behind it is just getting the story told.”

[*Click here*](#) to contribute to the Kickstarter campaign for *Stolen*.

Direct Link: <http://montrealgazette.com/entertainment/local-arts/plight-of-aboriginal-women-inspires-kawennahere-devery-jacobss-short-film-stolen>

Yukon First Nations make imagineNATIVE films on identity

Students have two days to plan, film and edit movies on aboriginal themes as part of a national competition

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 11, 2015 6:39 PM CT Last Updated: Mar 11, 2015 6:58 PM CT



The filmmakers do all the shooting and editing on the tablets during the two-day whirlwind workshop. (Philippe Morin/CBC)

The people behind Toronto's ImagineNATIVE Film Festival are travelling the country and their latest stop was Whitehorse.

The artistic organization that promotes aboriginal media is looking for First Nations youth from different communities to tell their personal stories. It held workshops and gave students two days to shoot and edit a film using a tablet.

CBC North's Philippe Morin dropped by the workshop and met with some of the would-be directors to find out more about their films.



Duran Smith said it wasn't easy making a short film in two days but he's happy with the result. (Philippe Morin/CBC)

Duran Smith gave the impression that making a film in 48 hours is frantic.

"It was called ... 'Why' as in, 'why do First Nations have such a bad reputation?' We only had two days to record and come up with the storyboard, that's why a lot of them are kind of rough around the edges," he said.

Although the films are as diverse as the students themselves, they all cover some aspect of aboriginal identity, focusing on themes like education, language and racism.

Austin Smith interviewed his grandmother, a language coordinator.

"It's pretty much about what we can do to help people to learn a lot easier, what we can do to make it easier for people to speak in native language so we don't lose our language," he said.



Autumn Jules did her project on integrating traditional knowledge into the western curriculum. (Philippe Morin/CBC)

Autumn Jules did her project on integrating traditional knowledge into the western curriculum.

"If the non-First Nations have the knowledge about us and who we are, and why we are the way we are, I think it'll be a breakthrough for equality," she said.

"I think we'll be more equal because they'll actually understand us a little more."

Once the films are posted online, people from across the country will be able to vote for their favourite. The winning film will be featured at the imagineNative Film festival in Toronto next fall.

The film workshop will next be travelling to Lower Post BC as well as Carcross Yukon before moving to Nunavut.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/yukon-first-nations-make-imagenative-films-on-identity-1.2991352>

The Venue at the River Cree Resort and Casino shut down for engineering flaws

By [Catherine Griwkowsky](#), *Edmonton Sun*

First posted: Wednesday, March 11, 2015 09:00 PM MDT | Updated: Thursday, March 12, 2015 10:04 AM MDT



The River Cree Resort and Casino on the Enoch Cree Nation reserve just west of Edmonton's City limits, Thursday Dec. 1, 2011. DAVID BLOOM EDMONTON SUN QMI AGENCY

Another Edmonton concert facility has shut down – temporarily -- due to building codes.

The [River Cree Resort and Casino](#) at the Enoch Cree Nation announced on Wednesday evening that “The Venue”, a temporary tent structure will be voluntarily closed and plans are underway to refund or relocate shows and are expected to have a full list of relocation by March 13.

Shows that were booked up until July of this year will be relocated or refunded, after which time a new temporary structure will be put in place.

Read River Cree's full statement below

The new permanent concert facility will start construction in 2017. The new permanent venue is expected to open in 2019.

While the events hosted in the event for the past eight years without safety issues, but when a building code deficiency was found, the management decided to shut it down immediately.

The large white tent was built by a company that no longer exists when a part-owner, who has since left the River Cree Resort and Casino was with the company.

There has been no directive to shut The Venue down, but it is voluntarily being shut down by River Cree Enterprises, which took over ownership and management last year.

Part of that takeover included an engineering study, which revealed the deficiency.

“Public safety is our number one priority,” said Robert Morin, CEO, River Cree Enterprises. “We would never want to endanger anyone, so as soon as we learned that The Venue was not up to code we decided to shut it down. We closed it immediately and work will start right away to build another temporary structure on that site, which will be larger and have better amenities. The new temporary structure, which will meet or exceed current building codes, should be completed in July of this year. Our long-term plan has always been to build a permanent concert structure on site. Nothing about that plan has changed, and we still expect to have a permanent venue up in 2018.”

Guests will be refunded purchased tickets for shows which cannot be housed in alternate venues. Upcoming shows include Lynyrd Skynyrd on Saturday, The Price is Right on March 17 and 19, Amy Schumer on March 18 and Chad Brownlee on March 28.

Future information will be posted to www.rivercreetickets.com.

River Cree's Venue update below

Effective immediately as of March 10, 2015, The Venue, the concert facility at the River Cree Resort and Casino, has been closed. As part of a due diligence process resort management commissioned an engineering study. While there is no indication that the facility is unsafe, the study revealed that the structure is outside of current building codes.

Our decision is based on ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our guests. With this our first priority, guest satisfaction is our very close second priority. We are in the process of exploring alternate locations or dates for the shows we are presenting, and will be sharing these details with everyone as soon as they are available.

We regret any disruption this has for our customers and apologize for any inconvenience. We are making every effort to ensure the experience is as seamless and painless as possible. We are working to share details and event updates on www.rivercreetickets.com and encourage any effected guests to visit this website for more information.

We are planning to have details available on this site by 10:00am on Friday morning. This will include information on the following immediate shows:

- Saturday March 14 – Lynyrd Skynyrd
- Tuesday March 17 – The Price is Right
- Wednesday March 18 – Amy Schumer
- Thursday March 19 – The Price is Right
- Saturday March 28 – Chad Brownlee

Given the volume of tickets sold online, we encourage guests to utilize the internet to stay up-to-date.

The River Cree Resort and Casino thanks all customers for their understanding during this period, and looks forward to continue providing exciting and entertaining experiences for the Edmonton area.

Direct Link: <http://www.edmontonsun.com/2015/03/11/the-venue-at-the-river-cree-resort-and-casino-shut-down-for-engineering-flaws>

Aboriginal Business & Finance

Mi'kmaq Confederacy defends e-gaming plan efforts

Involvement has 'become fodder for provincial political advantage,' says MCPEI

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 06, 2015 8:20 PM AT Last Updated: Mar 06, 2015 8:20 PM AT



Don MacKenzie, executive director of the Mi'kmaq Confederacy of P.E.I., along with First Nation Chiefs Matilda Ramjattan and Brian Francis, issued Friday's statement. (CBC)

The Mi'kmaq Confederacy of P.E.I. issued a statement Friday afternoon on its efforts to regulate online gaming.

The statement — signed by Lennox Island First Nation Chief Matilda Ramjattan, Chief Brian Francis of the Abegweit First Nation and confederacy executive director Don MacKenzie — says the MCPEI was trying to "regulate an unregulated industry."

The statement says, in 2009, the P.E.I. First Nations, through MCPEI, entered into a partnership with the P.E.I. government to explore the regulation of online gaming.

The plan was to license and regulate gaming companies to ensure protection of the playing public.

Officials note the revenues from licensing fees would have gone toward their underfunded social programs.

"While the band councils were aware and fully supportive of this initiative, confidentiality was required to maintain a competitive advantage in the marketplace."

Officials say that band meetings would have been held prior to the project moving forward, but that the province backed out while the plan was still in the confidential stage.

"It's regrettable that these well-intended efforts have now become fodder for provincial political advantage," said the MCPEI.

"It cannot be expressed strongly enough that aboriginal and treaty rights would not have been impacted negatively in any way, shape or form."

MCPEI says it presents audits to the membership of both First Nations every year at an annual gathering and the government loan from Innovation PEI is covered in the main audits of 2009 to 2013.

Confederacy officials say the money, received in increments, went to McInnes Cooper to cover legal fees and professional service expenses.

They note no funds were used for normal MCPEI activities.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/mi-kmaq-confederacy-defends-e-gaming-plan-efforts-1.2985351>

Two First Nations Tribes Pull Up a Seat on Wall Street

[Alysa Landry](#)
3/9/15

Two of Canada's First Nations are breaking the glass ceiling.

The Beardy's & Okemasis First Nation of Saskatchewan, and the Nibinamik First Nation of Ontario, have purchased shares in NativeOne Financial Holdings LLC, the only Native-owned broker-dealer with a seat **on** the New York Stock Exchange. The agreement gives the two nations a presence on Wall Street, and an unprecedented voice when it comes to massive mining developments in Canada.

Proposed extractions in Ontario's Ring of Fire, where deposits of chromium, copper, zinc, platinum, vanadium and gold have been discovered, would impact at least 13 First Nations, including Nibinamik. And Beardy's & Okemasis is sitting on as much as \$5.5 billion in natural resources, said Dennis Smith, co-founder of NativeOne.

Without financial backing or clout, however, indigenous people lack the ability to tap into the industry or influence decisions. "This gives them a lot more leverage," Smith told ICTMN. "That has not happened on behalf of many First Nations of Canada. They've been pushed around, pushed out of the way. Now as owners of a broker-dealer on the NYSE, they can demand a seat at the table and level the playing field."

Founded in 2009 by Smith and Don Lyons, a member of the Morongo Band of Mission Indians, NativeOne aimed to help tribes achieve greater participation in the financial services industry. It joined Wall Street in December 2010 and purchased a seat on the NYSE in August 2011.

Chiefs of the Nibinamik and Beardy's & Okemasis nations in February signed agreements with NativeOne. They were the first of what Smith hopes will be more than a dozen such agreements among Canada's First Nations, extending financial capacity and clout to tribes across North America.

"They now own a small piece of NativeOne, so they can go directly to Wall Street to get fair and level financial advice," Smith said. "Up until now, none of them has been able to get capital to do billion-dollar mining operations."

The agreement puts the two nations on par with cities and municipalities, which finance construction by issuing bonds, Smith said. A presence on Wall Street gives First Nations control of natural resources, and the power to use industry for development. "Without access to the financial world, every city would be an island unto themselves," Smith said. "That's pretty much what happened to the First Nations. They were kept away from the financial industry and taken advantage of because of the resources."

John Yellowhead, chief of the Nibinamik First Nation, said owning a share of NativeOne opens the door for the tribe to generate revenue and develop corporations while also ensuring that resources are extracted in a way that protects the environment. It also allows Nibinamik to invest in its impoverished communities. "When we look at our communities, they're very poor," Yellowhead said. "We need to be proactive, to work together, to alleviate some of the issues that surround us."

Increased financial power often leads to political influence, said Rick Gamble, chief of the Beardy's & Okemasis First Nation. He looks forward to making "bold statements" when it comes to Canada's future. "There's a lot of resource development in Canada, and First Nations are continuously pushed aside and never given an opportunity to get involved," Gamble said. "This offers the opportunity. The doors are open. It's up to us to decide how we want to move forward."

But without an economic base, tribes don't have a voice, Gamble said. "Now that we have the money, we can call the shots," he said. "We can influence government decisions. When our First Nations capitalize on this it will change the economic world."

Smith estimates that American Indians in North America control natural resources that are worth hundreds of billions of dollars.

"It's time they were in control," he said. "Access to the financial markets can make this happen."

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/03/09/two-first-nations-tribes-pull-seat-wall-street-159516>

Technical co-op 'an interesting idea' says Thomas

By Sean Trembath, The StarPhoenix, With files by Jeremy Warren March 9, 2015

The Chief of the Saskatoon Tribal Council has a good early impression of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations' (FSIN) proposal to establish a co-op to oversee emergency and technical services on reserves provincewide.

"I think it's an interesting idea. I haven't seen all the details yet, but it's worth pursuing," Chief Felix Thomas said.

FSIN interim Chief Kimberly Jonathan announced the proposed co-op Friday. It would be managed by member First Nations and tribal councils, Jonathan said. It would oversee areas such as fire protection, water quality, housing codes, community standards and emergency management.

Thomas said he had heard talk of a technical services co-op in the past, but thought the recent deaths of two toddlers in a fire on the Makwa Sahgaiehcan First Nation and the national attention that followed may have spurred Friday's announcement.

"I think the events that have transpired probably sped it up a bit," he said.

He was positive about how the co-op would be a First Nations organization.

"I think it's a good idea that it's controlled by First Nations. We look after our own kids, we like to think, better than anybody else," Thomas said. Ken Coates, Canada Research Chair in Regional Innovation at the University of Saskatchewan's Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy, said gaining the support of all the First Nations in the province will be key for the co-op.

"The idea is an excellent idea and it has enormous potential provided that individual First Nations and tribal councils know that is not something being imposed on them," he said.

He also pointed to the importance of self-governance.

"First Nations are used to having people far removed from them making decisions for them. If you take that as a problem, I think the co-op model is a brilliant model. It's membership driven," Coates said.

Jonathan said the proposal for the co-op will be presented to the chiefs at the FSIN's general assembly in May. The goal is to have the legal specifics sorted out by June, and have the co-op fully operational by next spring.

Direct Link:

<http://www.leaderpost.com/life/Technical+interesting+idea+says+Thomas/10873071/story.html>

Mi'kmaq elders want altar returned to N.S. First Nation community



CTV Atlantic

Published Wednesday, March 11, 2015 9:23AM ADT

A wooden altar that has been in a Cape Breton church for more than a century is now the subject of a bitter ownership dispute.

Mi'kmaq elders at the Potlotek First Nation in Chapel Island, N.S. say the altar was given to them by French missionaries in the late 18th century. According to legend, the altar was rescued during a British attack on a French fort.

"The natives took this from the church before it burned down and they hid it in the woods," says Lillian Marshall, a Mi'kmaq historian who has been studying the history of the altar for years.

She says the altar was taken to Chapel Island, but it was later given or loaned to Fr. John MacDougall in Johnstown, N.S. in 1891.

“Somehow it was asked to be located here for safekeeping and it has been here ever since,” says Gail Johnson, a parishioner at Sacred Heart Church.

“The parishioners here, of course we love the altar, and it’s been here for all these years.”

But Mi’kmaq leaders say the altar was given to them centuries ago, and now they want it back.

“It’s been here long enough. We had it over 100 years before that, and they had it over 100 years,” says Potlotek First Nation Chief Wilbert Marshall.

He says it’s important for Mi’kmaq artifacts to be returned to First Nations communities.

An archaeologist with the Mi’kmaq Rights Initiative has assessed the piece and has determined that it is safe to move. But the assessment also found mold and mildew on the wood, and that has the chief concerned.

“Now it’s time for us to rescue it again, because if we leave it here, nobody’s going to have an altar,” says Chief Marshall.

“Before anything is moved, it definitely has to be determined what part of the altar stays and what part of the altar may go,” says Johnson.

Pieces have been added to the original altar over the years, and Johnson says she wants to ensure the artifacts end up where they belong. Lillian Marshall says that’s what she’s hoping for as well.

“I think a lot of people will be very happy to see it,” she says.

Chief Marshall says he would like to see the altar back in the Potlotek First Nation by spring.

Direct Link: <http://atlantic.ctvnews.ca/mi-kmaq-elders-want-altar-returned-to-n-s-first-nation-community-1.2274073>

Empowering aboriginal entrepreneurs

By Scott Larson, The StarPhoenix March 11, 2015

A reignited program originating from Ideas Inc. is the aptly named Empower, which is exactly what it aims to do for aboriginal entrepreneurs.

Empower is a program that allows First Nations and Metis' individuals explore entrepreneurship as a means to create job opportunity for themselves and their communities.

"We have completely reshaped the program," says Depesh Parmar, executive director at Ideas Inc.

The program is looking for 15 to 20 aboriginal entrepreneurs from across the province and it will provide them with support such as mentorship, coaching, webinars and podcasts to further their endeavours.

"The appetite for aboriginal entrepreneurship is very high," said Parmar. "But for this program to be successful it was imperative for Ideas Inc. to have a First Nation's individual spearhead the program."

To that end they have hired Heather Abbey to be the program director.

Abbey, from Little Pine First Nation, is a product of the program and has her own online business, Shopindig.ca.

She said the program will focus on breaking down barriers aboriginal entrepreneurs face and also have a cultural component to it.

"As First nations entrepreneurs they face a lot of barriers — everything from transportation to childcare to funding," she said, adding they will be bringing in an Elder to work with the entrepreneurs."

Abbey knows first hand about those barriers. She began her online business, which offers Indigenous merchandise from a variety of artisans, as student who was confined to bed rest during her pregnancy.

To make the business a reality Abbey competed in a number of business planning competitions to acquire needed startup funds and mentoring.

"I recognize the challenges that a lot of the aboriginal entrepreneurs face because I have been there," she said.

Within the next month they will begin marketing the program, including having Abbey travel across Saskatchewan to give information sessions.

"We are looking for businesses that are really focused on getting to the next level," she said. "We have already had businesses express interest, from clothing lines to someone who wants to do a bannock-style food truck."

While some entrepreneurs may set up shop in their own communities, Abbey said there are plans for an Empower Centre to be located in the Ideas Inc. building next to the Farmer's Market.

"We are looking to have a co-working space for the aboriginal entrepreneurs," she said, adding participants will have access to essentials like Wi-Fi, laptops, printers, scanners, phones, faxes and a place where they can connect with an Elder.

"It is important for us to have (the Empower participants) immersed with other like-minded entrepreneurs in the building," Parmar said. "That creates cross-pollination among other entrepreneurs in the building.

"We have to remove barriers," he said. "So how do we create as many opportunities as possible so that it's easier for an entrepreneur to participate?"

Prospective entrepreneurs for the program will need to go through an interview to see if they are a right fit, Parmar said.

Those entrepreneurs interested in the program, which is being funded by BHP Billiton and a number of other sources, can contact Ideas Inc. at ideasyxe.com or 306-653-2007.

Direct Link:

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/business/Empowering+aboriginal+entrepreneurs/10881329/story.html>

Aboriginal Community Development

First Nations want 'fair deal' in Hwy 69 four-laning

More than 80 kilometres of road south of Sudbury, Ont. still need to be transformed into four lanes

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 06, 2015 11:15 AM ET Last Updated: Mar 06, 2015 3:23 PM ET



Shawanaga First Nation currently runs a gas bar off of Highway 69 that employs about eight people. (Google)

Three First Nation communities have yet to reach a deal with the province over the ongoing four-laning of Highway 69.

Chief Wayne Pamajewon of Shawanaga First Nation said he wants his community to benefit from a new interchange.

“We are not trying to hold up the development of this highway,” he said.



Chief Wayne Pamajewon of Shawanaga First Nation says he wants his community to benefit from a new interchange on Highway 69. (ammsa.com)

“All we're saying is that we need to get a fair deal out of giving up some of our land for that [Highway 69] to be put on.”

The Minister of Transportation Steven Del Duca gave a briefing Friday on the construction progress of more than 80 kilometres of road that stills need to be transformed into four lanes.

Pamajewon said Shawanaga First Nation currently runs a gas bar off Highway 69 that employs about eight people.

“We're not against development. The only thing that we're against is you keep coming through here and taking our land for granted, I think, and for nothing.”

Shawanaga First Nation is about to reach a settlement with the province over Old Highway 69 for about \$4 million, Pamajewon added.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/sudbury/first-nations-want-fair-deal-in-hwy-69-four-laning-1.2984468>

Volunteer group helps First Nations with stray dogs

14 dogs picked up so far

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 06, 2015 5:30 AM CT Last Updated: Mar 06, 2015 5:30 AM CT



Cady Shaw is a co-founder of CC RezQs. (CBC)



Cady Shaw is a dedicated animal lover. (CBC)

A group of dog lovers have formed CC RezQs, a volunteer-run animal rescue service aimed at helping First Nations communities with stray dogs.

"Lots of the reserves that we've gone to have been very grateful," Cady Shaw, co-founder of the group, said. "And they work with us. And they will let us know if there are particular dogs in need or if there are situations that need attention."

The idea for the group came from Shaw's friend Caillin Rodonets. Rodonets' work takes her to many First Nations and she noticed many dogs that were running loose, abandoned or being neglected.

Shaw has adopted two dogs, including the very first one they picked up. She is also caring for two more dogs as she works to find homes for the animals.

It has been a year since the group started its work and so far they have found homes for 14 dogs. They ensure each animal is seen by a veterinarian before it goes to a home.

"Sometimes the dogs can pack up," Shaw said. "And if they're not properly trained, you know, there have been dog attacks and we want to prevent that."

The project keeps everyone in the group very busy. Shaw is also studying at the University of Regina and working.

Another Regina-based member of the group is Angele Beesley.

"It gives them a chance to be loved one-on-one," Beesley said. "And not have to fight for their food or attention."

Shaw said C-C Rez-Qs is always grateful for any donations and offers of foster homes for the rescued dogs.



Cady Shaw provides a temporary home to dogs picked up as strays. She also has adopted two rescued dogs. (CBC)

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/volunteer-group-helps-first-nations-with-stray-dogs-1.2983726>

Aboriginal Crime & Justice

'I am writing for Jesse Armitage,' judge says in rare sentencing report

Justice Shaun Nakatsuru's sentencing delves into issues in offender's past, considers future

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 06, 2015 11:00 AM ET Last Updated: Mar 06, 2015 1:00 PM ET



Justice Shaun Nakatsuru, who works at the Gladue courtroom at Toronto's Old City Hall, is winning praise for a unique ruling in the case of a young aboriginal man. (Tony Hisgett/Wikimedia Commons)

An Ontario judge's written decision in a young aboriginal man's court case is being hailed as a unique, inspiring and empathetic legal ruling.

Justice Shaun Nakatsuru took four months to craft a sentencing report for Jesse Armitage, a 29-year-old with a lengthy criminal record who was charged with theft.

While some judges would spend as little as a few minutes on a basic oral decision, Nakatsuru delved into Armitage's history to understand how the "troubled" son of an aboriginal family had come to stand before him.

The ruling was handed down on Feb. 11, and is now winning praise in the legal community.

"What's different about this case is the extreme and overt empathy that Justice Nakatsuru shows for 29-year-old Jesse Armitage, but more importantly, for the family that he comes from and the native Canadian community that he comes from," Steve Benmor, a family lawyer in Toronto who was wowed by the judge's report, told CBC Radio's *Metro Morning* on Friday.

Benmor praised Nakatsuru for departing from the norm, saying he was amazed to see a judge treat a ruling "almost as a diary entry."

Early in the decision, Nakatsuru notes he is writing in intentionally plain language — something judges, himself included — often don't do.

"In this case, I am writing for Jesse Armitage," Nakatsuru writes.

The judge writes clearly about Armitage's history of crime — often theft from businesses and breaches of probation.

"Mr. Armitage has found himself in a pattern of minor criminality that he is unable to escape from," Nakatsuru writes.

The judge also writes plainly about Armitage's family, which includes a grandmother who survived the residential school system and rarely speaks about it, other family members who have suffered from alcohol abuse, and a son he had as a 19-year-old and rarely sees.

"One important thing I must consider is the past injustices done to the aboriginal peoples in this country," Nakatsuru writes. "How that has affected the present. How that has affected Mr. Armitage. I must also consider the present problem of the over-incarceration of aboriginal offenders."

He continues: "I believe he knew that there was no other way for him to get healthy. I believe that he had come to a point in his life where he was ready. Ready for a chance to change."

Ruling 'inspirational', lawyer says

Nakatsuru initially gave Armitage a 14-month conditional sentence to be served in the community, with several conditions, including reappearing before the judge.

When Armitage missed a meeting with Nakatsuru and was arrested again for another minor crime, the two met again.

At this point, Armitage asked for a nine-month conditional jail sentence so he could be sent to the St. Lawrence Valley Treatment Centre.

"He asked for this because he wanted to be sure he had enough time in custody to fully make use of the help available," Nakatsuru writes.

Benmor said the judge could only have this kind of insight after looking at the entire context of Armitage's case — rather than just focusing on one specific incident.

He said the ruling was an “inspirational decision” for anyone who works in the legal system.

Nakasuru wrote:

"If I could describe Mr. Armitage as a tree, his roots remain hidden beneath the ground. I can see what he is now. I can see the trunk. I can see the leaves. But much of what he is and what has brought him before me, I cannot see. They are still buried.

"But I am sure that some of those roots involve his aboriginal heritage and ancestry. They help define who he is. They have been a factor in his offending. They must be taken into account in his sentencing."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/i-am-writing-for-jesse-armitage-judge-says-in-rare-sentencing-report-1.2984316>

Jonathan 'incorrect' about draft agreement: Reiter

By Betty Ann Adam, The Starphoenix, With files from Janet French March 10, 2015

In a strongly-worded letter to Kimberly Jonathan, interim chief of the Federation of

Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN), Government Relations Minister Jim Reiter said the province provides the same emergency help to First Nations as it does to other communities and a new draft agreement with the federal government would allow it to recover the cost of helping First Nations.

He is "disappointed" with statements Jonathan made to the media on Friday about

the provincial-federal agreement because they were incorrect, Reiter wrote - a perspective Jonathan refutes.

Last week, Jonathan described the \$10 million the province would receive over 10 years from Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) as "Indian monies." She demanded that the provinciafederal talks "cease and desist" and that the resources be redirected to the creation of a First Nations co-operative that would oversee technical and emergency services on reserves.

In his letter, shared with media on Monday morning, Reiter said "the impression that could leave is that the province has an interest in receiving federal money at the expense of First Nations. I can say categorically that I would not support this approach.

"The money the province would recover from AANDC is not at the expense of money that would otherwise go to First Nations, nor is it being redirected from existing funding the federal government provides to First Nations," Reiter wrote.

Reiter said Jonathan should have known that, since he and his department officials met with her and FSIN officials on Feb. 23 and informed them about the draft agreement.

"I asked for her input and offered to consider any suggestions she had very, very seriously," Reiter said.

The funding would also help the province enhance its emergency services for First Nations that ask for help with emergency preparedness, fire safety and prevention, emergency response training and facilitating closer co-operation between First Nations and adjacent municipalities, he wrote.

Reiter also asked Jonathan to lay out in writing whether it is the FSIN's position that the province should stop helping First Nations when "required and requested for public safety reasons."

Deputy minister Al Hilton also sent a detailed letter in February to FSIN executive operating officer Danette Starblanket, in which he noted that AANDC had previously assured the province it would engage First Nations in discussions about the proposed agreement.

"Apparently, and unfortunately, this did not occur," Hilton wrote in that letter, which was also provided to the media on Monday.

In an interview Monday evening, Jonathan said Reiter misunderstood. She said she did not say money would be redirected to provincial coffers from First Nations.

However, transferring federal funds to provincial emergency programs could prevent First Nations from building the capacity to run their own emergency services, Jonathan said.

She was reassured to learn the province won't pursue the federal money without consultation with First Nations, she added.

"As we move through these growing pains toward a new relationship, it is my hope that the decision-making will include First Nations, rather than backroom bilateral agreements negotiated from the Indian envelope."

Premier Brad Wall said a process is in place involving the federal and provincial governments, "and here lately the FSIN, too," to find about \$1 million in federal money for positions within the fire commissioner's office to work exclusively with First Nations on fire suppression and safety.

"That is real. That's available right now," Wall said. "The minister (Reiter) will have more comment on what we're going to do now that there's a specific proposal for \$5 million each from the federal and provincial governments. It goes far beyond fire safety ... and obviously it's a much larger proposal."

On Friday, Jonathan announced a plan for a technical and emergency co-operative of First Nations and tribal councils that would oversee delivery of fire protection, water quality, housing codes, community standards and emergency management on reserves.

Jonathan said the proposal will be presented to chiefs at the FSIN's assembly in May. They hope to have the specifics settled by June and have the co-op fully operational by next spring, she said.

Direct Link:

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/news/Jonathan+incorrect+about+draft+agreement+Reiter/10876252/story.html>

Nunavut's jails extremely unsafe for inmates and staff: Auditor General

[National News](#) | March 10, 2015 by [Kent Driscoll](#) |

Kent Driscoll

APTN National News

IQALUIT— Nunavut's jails are unsafe, lack maximum security facilities and completely lack rehabilitation programs that would help inmates return to society, according to a report from the Auditor General of Canada released Tuesday.

The report found that Nunavut's jails are overcrowded and getting worse, that inmates are offered little if any services and that jail staff are not trained with basics such as first aid or the proper use of force.

"Our audit concluded that the (Nunavut) Department of Justice has not met key responsibilities for inmates within the correctional system," said Assistant Auditor-General Ronnie Campbell. "The safety and security of staff and inmates at the Baffin Correctional Centre and the Rankin Inlet Healing Facility are at risk"

Some of the report's findings were so severe that the federal auditor general's office reached out to Nunavut Corrections prior to the release of the audit for safety reasons.

"We also found that evacuation drills were not being conducted at either facility... we sent a letter to the acting deputy minister of The Department of Justice during the audit to advise her of this," said Campbell.

The audit found that despite the high number of crimes committed in Nunavut connected to substance abuse, “there is no substance abuse treatment centre” operating in Nunavut.

“It is especially important for inmates to have access to the programs and support they need in custody,” said the audit.

The audit found there were no substance abuse programs offered at the Baffin Correctional Centre for seven months in 2012 and the program as offered only twice between January and September 2014.

A total of 98 per cent of male adult inmates in the territory are Inuit and their average age is 32, the audit found. Yet the Inuit traditional values, known as Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and which are written into Nunavut’s justice system, are not applied inside the territory’s jails.

“The directives contain little guidance on how Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit can be incorporated into other aspects of the corrections system,” reads the audit.

The audit found that Nunavut’s mental health issues also extend into the territory’s prisons, but the corrections department employs only one psychologist.

“Without mental health services, inmates rehabilitation efforts can be limited as the issues underlying criminal behaviour were not being addressed,” said the audit.

Jail guards and staff are also woefully undertrained, the audit found, which many not having mandatory training in “first-aid, mental health issues, the criminal justice system or the proper use of force.”

The audit also found that correctional employees increased their income by 20 per cent by working overtime. At the Baffin Correctional Centre alone, 16 front-line workers increased their annual salary by 50 per cent. Within that 50 per cent group, five staff members saw their pay rise by more than 90 per cent.

The audit found that inmates were being sent to segregation without the authorization of the warden, as is required. The report found that the warden authorized only one of 14 segregation cases studied by auditors. The report found that routine reviews and observations of inmates in segregation were also ignored.

The territory has also failed to adequately monitor land camps where inmates are taken out of the prison for cultural activity outdoors. There are five camps operating in Nunavut at an annual cost of \$1 million. The audit states that “the program was not well monitored by the Department.”

Case management faced criticism from federal auditors which reviewed 39 different inmate files. Iqaluit’s Uttaqivik Community residential house – a halfway house for low

security inmates – received praised, but the Baffin Correctional Centre and the new Rankin Inlet Healing Facility did not.

“Serious case management deficiencies at Baffin Correctional Centre and Rankin Inlet Healing facility limit the Department’s efforts to rehabilitate inmates and prepare them for release back to the community, “ said Campbell.

At the Baffin jail none of the 21 files auditors examined had any indication they were monitoring an inmate’s progress, and only one of the 21 had a plan for the inmates release.

The 44-page report contains 17 recommendations.

Nunavut’s Department of Justice agreed with all the recommendations, including improving care of maximum-security inmates, using data collected by territorial officials, providing more oversight for staff and improving case management for inmates.

The report was tabled Tuesday in the Nunavut Legislative Assembly.

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/03/10/nunavuts-jails-extremely-unsafe-inmates-staff-auditor-general/>

Okalik: Nunavut corrections policy will be “grounded in Inuit values”

Minister responds to auditor general’s report with “made-in-Nunavut” plan

PETER VARGA, March 12, 2015 - 10:39 am



Nunavut Justice Minister Paul Okalik said his department has already acted on some recommendations found in the Auditor General of Canada’s report on corrections in Nunavut. The government will follow through with more actions “grounded in Inuit values,” he said. (PHOTO BY PETER VARGA)

Nunavut's justice minister, Paul Okalik, says the territory needs a "made-in-Nunavut" solution to rehabilitate convicted offenders doing territorial time.

"We're looking at the legislation to cater to the inmates, so that more Inuit-focused treatment will be provided to the inmates, and they can move on with their lives and be more productive members" of society, he told *Nunatsiaq News* at Nunavut's legislative assembly, March 11.

In a minister's statement earlier that day, Okalik set out his department's response to the [Auditor General of Canada's scathing report on Nunavut's correctional system.](#)

The report found Nunavut's correctional facilities pose serious risks to inmates and staff.

Okalik said his department has taken "immediate remedial action" on "urgent issues" such as fire evacuation drills, and overcrowding at the Baffin Correctional Centre in Iqaluit.

"We've met a number of recommendations already," Okalik said.

The opening of the Rankin Inlet Healing Facility in 2013 and partial opening of the new Makigiarvik centre in Iqaluit allowed the department to decrease the BCC's inmate population to 40 per cent of its capacity, which has freed up space for repairs and remediation work at the centre, Okalik said.

According to Department of Justice data quoted in the auditor general's report, about 98 per cent of Nunavut's adult male inmates are Inuit.

In response to the auditor general's findings on his department's deficiencies in case management and rehabilitation, Okalik said "long-term solutions in corrections will be grounded in Inuit values, knowledge and culture."

In the current session of the legislative assembly, MLAs are looking at amendments to the Corrections Act, "beginning with protection of an inmate's human rights," Okalik said in his minister's statement.

"In the coming months, the Department of Justice will consult with community justice committees, traditional counsellors and others to seek out best practices for making the Corrections Act relevant to our territory."

Part of the department's plan includes employment of Inuit staff for the new Makigiarvik facility.

"In doing so, programs and services will be delivered in the language of the population and reflect the rehabilitation needed to enable an individual's full participation in society," Okalik said.

Nunavut's Corrections Act dates to 1988, when the region was part of the Northwest Territories. Updates to the legislation are in a "first phase," Okalik said.

"Hopefully this session we'll pass the first phase, and in the coming months, we'll do an extensive review to make sure the act is reflective of our territory," he told *Nunatsiaq News*.

One of the most serious criticisms in the auditor general's report is that since 1996, Nunavut has done little to provide for maximum-security offenders, who are usually housed with less serious offenders.

Nunavut has been without a maximum-security facility since it separated from the Northwest Territories.

"That's a challenge we face, is opening up a maximum-security for inmates, who do need that," Okalik said.

"I think we're slowly meeting the expectations that the auditor general is addressing in his findings," he said.

The territory has many competing priorities, he added, "and we're trying to accommodate these needs while addressing other barriers that inmates may face in terms of serving their time, and getting proper programming."

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674okalik_nunavut_corrections_policy_will_be_grounded_in_inuit_values/

Aboriginal Education & Youth

Province gives schools grants to improve First Nations literacy, graduation rates

Prairie Spirit School Division partners with Muskeg Lake First Nation and Beatty's and Okemasis First Nation

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 06, 2015 5:30 AM CT Last Updated: Mar 06, 2015 5:30 AM CT



The Prairie Spirit School Division announced Thursday it received two provincial grants to support an ongoing partnership with local First Nations communities.

The Invitational Shared Services Initiative grants are worth a total of \$150,000 per year for up to three years. The goal is to have First Nations students living on reserves benefit from the same supports as students living off reserve.

A partnership already exists between the school division, Muskeg Lake Cree Nation, and Beardy's and Okemasis First Nation. The communities have set goals in the areas of improving literacy, numeracy, and graduation rates.

"We believe this funding will support improved learning for all students," said Kim Beaulieu, learning superintendent for the school division, in a release.

The school division added the grants will be used for supplies, salaries, and professional development.

The provincial government established these grants last year to support improved outcomes for First Nations and Métis students.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/province-gives-schools-grants-to-improve-first-nations-literacy-graduation-rates-1.2983700>

Council of Yukon First Nations holds education summit

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 10, 2015 7:41 AM CT Last Updated: Mar 10, 2015 7:41 AM CT

An education action plan with Yukon First Nations is the focus of an education summit this week in Whitehorse.

The Yukon government and Council of Yukon First Nations signed the "joint education action plan" in 2013.



Ruth Massie, Council of Yukon First Nations Grand Chief, says the goal of the action plan is to fill some of the gaps in aboriginal education. (CBC)

CYFN Grand Chief Ruth Massie says the goal of the plan is to fill some of the gaps in aboriginal education.

"Our goals are enhancing culture and native language in the schools, bringing up the education gap on Yukon First Nation students in all the schools," she said.

Another aim will be to increase parents' participation in education.

Massie says the joint plan has yet to be implemented, and discussions taking place today and tomorrow are about specific programs and ways to implement its ideals.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/council-of-yukon-first-nations-holds-education-summit-1.2988183>

First Nation students show off science projects at University of Manitoba

By Sara Calnek, [CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 11, 2015 4:24 PM CT Last Updated: Mar 11, 2015 5:26 PM CT

Nine-year-old Georgia Campbell from the Ebb and Flow First Nation has big dreams when she grows up: she wants to cure cancer.

But first, she's making plastic milk.

"First we have to heat up the milk, then we have to pour it in there and put a bit of vinegar in it," she explained.

"Then we have to strain it into another container and then what is left behind is a really gooey thing. You should feel it."

The Grade 4 student never thought mixing those two things would turn into the thing she discovered.



"It was amazing. When we were stirring it, it was like a chemical reaction happening," Campbell said. "I'm like, how in the world does that happen?!"

She wants to work with chemicals when she grows up and is determined to find a cure for cancer.

"I'm not like those people who worry about themselves; I worry about other people too," she said. "I care for other people."

That's what the 13th annual Manitoba First Nations Science Fair is for — to inspire students to become engaged in the sciences.

Rudy Subedar of the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre said Georgia Campbell is on the right track: first, she becomes aware of the sciences, shows an interest in the field, and she believes that she can do it. That is how a scientist is born.

"That is the effect of this program — it becomes part of their dialogue and part of their thinking," Subedar said.

Scientific surprises

High school students Tanner Roulette and Jewel Assiniboine from the Sandy Bay First Nation have made a surprising discovery.

Their project is called Water Quality and Duckweed. The point was to see if the aquatic plant can tell the quality of the water that it is growing in.

"It is important to me because I wanted to know how these plants grow and how they live," Roulette said.

They added various different substances to duckweed in tap water and aquarium water. They tried oil, vinegar, bleach, and fertilizer.

Their findings were unexpected. They found the fertilizer killed the duckweed while the bleach multiplied it.

"I just expected differently. I thought bleach would kill it and fertilizer would help it grow, but it was the opposite," Roulette said.

"The fertilizer killed it more than bleach did; bleach made it multiply when you add it in the duckweed."

Roulette said science is an inspiration to him, especially the unexpected results.

"I don't think anyone would know anything without science. Science is what got all of us to know things. Science is our only answer to everything." Roulette said.

More than 400 students from 35 First Nations across Manitoba are taking part in this year's Manitoba First Nations Science Fair.

On Wednesday, they set up their displays, then on Thursday there will be the judging and the awards ceremony.

The students are competing for gold, silver and bronze medallions in excellence in science, as well as a chance to represent Manitoba at a national science fair.

Some other displays include a mouse trap-powered car and projects highlighting optical illusions, water sediment and mould growth.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/first-nation-students-show-off-science-projects-at-university-of-manitoba-1.2991182>

U of R centre helps Aboriginal students make the grade

By Carol Todd, Leader-Post Special Projects March 12, 2015



The University of Regina Aboriginal Student Centre (ASC) is designed to help Aboriginal students settle into the university environment and excel at their studies.

Tansi. Welcome. The Cree word for hello and the fact that everyone is welcome are the forces that help turn the great wheel of life for the University of Regina Aboriginal Student Centre (ASC).

While the centre's main focus is on helping Aboriginal students make the grade in university, centre manager Misty Longman said everyone is welcome. "The door is always open for the city and Treaty 4 territory to come and be a part of what we're doing and share what they're doing with us," she said. The centre's website says "all of the campus community is welcome in the Centre, as creating opportunities for intercultural and intergenerational exchange strengthens our campus community, and allows us to achieve the greatest heights in education and learning."

Specific programs, too, are open to all, such as weekend Aboriginal coaching modules, an introduction to powwow and even sacred pipe ceremonies. "We have pipe ceremonies for all staff and students, so you'll see a variety of students [there]. It's really neat, because you'll see other federated college students - you'll see Campion and Luther students often come," Longman said.

The majority of the centre's efforts are geared toward helping Aboriginal students settle into the university environment and excel at their studies. It helps those students make a

successful transition into university and stay there, participate in university events, successfully complete their students and make a positive transition into the workforce. "The purpose is to educate, empower and engage, but with Aboriginal world views and practices intrinsically incorporated into all those components," she said.

A major program is the nito^ncipa^min oma^Student Success Program (OMA Program), which provides mentors and other benefits, such as priority access to tutors, cultural and social programming, and even scholarships, to first-year Aboriginal students. The free program also keeps the wheels of life moving, as it encourages these new students to become leaders in their own right. "It's our way of establishing academic leaders the second they step on campus," Longman said, adding that a current tutor told her that, had the program been in place when she went to university, it would have been much easier and she would have graduated earlier.

The centre opened its doors in what was once the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College (SIFC) lounge in the College West building in 2006. When First Nations University of Canada (FNUniv) started up in 2003, it left a bit of a gap in the university's overall support for Aboriginal students, Longman said. "SIFC was housed very centrally and was very integral throughout the university. When the new [FNUniv] building opened in 2003, we lost that central component within the larger campus and became very much more selfstanding."

She said the new ASC location recognized the past while working toward the future. "When they opened it up in 2006, they put it in the former SIFC student lounge space in College West so the start of Indigenous education on campus, and the work of Lloyd Barber and SIFC would still be acknowledged." That location currently houses the centre's seminar and learning centre, with the rest of it located in the Research and Innovation Centre.

"I want everybody to know that it's a place for all. It's a place for all community members to come together and be a part of it in some capacity or form, even if it's just coming in to say hi, bringing in posters from other events, coming to our ceremonies or being involved in any way," Longman said. As a central hub for all students on campus, faculty, staff and community to gather and find a sense of belonging in the larger university environment, the ASC helps Aboriginal students on the road to success through higher learning and invites everyone to experience the great wheel of life.

Direct Link:

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/centre+helps+Aboriginal+students+make+grade/10882569/story.html>

Aboriginal Health

Food-cost crisis shames Far North: 'We can't pretend it doesn't exist anymore'

In Nunavut, a daily struggle for sustenance



Water evaporates from Frobisher Bay as the sun sets in Iqaluit, Nunavut on Tuesday, December 9, 2014.
THE CANADIAN PRESS/Sean Kilpatrick

By [Steve Rennie](#)

IQALUIT, NUNAVUT: Israel Mablick opens the door of his refrigerator and takes stock of its meagre offerings.

"This is all we have for food," he says, gesturing to the mostly empty shelves.

There is a small pot of leftover seal meat on the second shelf, next to a tub of margarine and a couple of slices of bread. There's juice, a bag of milk, some water and a carton of eggs, plus condiments and a small bag of shredded cheese.

In his freezer, there are a few bags of frozen vegetables next to a carton of Chapman's ice cream. Two cereal boxes — Corn Pops and Corn Flakes — are the only items in one of his cupboards.

"Inuit were moved around. The attitude was, 'Well, you know, what the hell? They can survive any place there's snow and caribou and foxes to be had'."

"That's all we have," Mablick says, "and there's six kids."

The 36-year-old Inuit man shares a small, two-bedroom Iqaluit apartment with his wife and their five kids, his mother, his sister and his young nephew. His is the face of hunger

in Nunavut, the bare cupboards and empty fridge emblematic of a long-standing problem that even today's government programs don't address.

The federal government's \$60-million food subsidy, Nutrition North, is only the latest of the proposed solutions that has stumbled under mismanagement and the enormity of the hunger problem.

Whether a solution can be found is anyone's guess. After all, food shortages are nothing new to the Inuit.

"There's always been incidents of starvation," said Frank Tester, an Arctic historian at the University of British Columbia.

One of the worst episodes occurred in the late 1940s and early 1950s, when a shift in caribou migration patterns caused widespread starvation in the southern interior of the Kivalliq Region to the west of Hudson Bay.



The collapse of the fox fur trade after the Second World War was devastating to the Inuit, who relied on it as a source of income to buy flour, tea, sugar, hunting traps, rifles and ammunition.

"Economically, Inuit were now in really serious trouble," Tester said.

In some cases, Inuit were relocated to other parts of the North with more abundant natural resources.

"Inuit were moved around. The attitude was, 'Well, you know, what the hell? They can survive any place there's snow and caribou and foxes to be had,'" said Tester, who has studied and written about the relocations.

But such relocations proved controversial. There was a royal commission in the 1990s. Ottawa eventually agreed to pay \$10 million into a trust fund to compensate the families of the Inuit who, in the 1950s, were moved 2,000 kilometres from Inukjuak in northern Quebec to what is now Resolute and Grise Fiord, the two most northerly communities in Canada

In 2010, then-aboriginal affairs minister John Duncan apologized on the government's behalf for the Inukjuak relocations.



But having Canadian civilians in an otherwise unoccupied area bolstered Canadian sovereignty at a time when other nations — especially the United States — were expressing increasing interest in the Arctic as a possible front in the Cold War with the Soviet Union.

To monitor the continent's northern frontier, Canada and the United States built 63 radar stations across the Arctic, stretching from Alaska to Baffin Island. The Distant Early Warning Line sites had a major impact on northern society. The stations — and the southerners who staffed them — were sometimes the first contact Inuit people had with the outside world.

A change in government policy in the 1950s and 1960s led to an upheaval of the traditional Inuit way of life, Tester said.

"By the mid-1950s, the government sort of saw what they thought was the handwriting on the wall," he said, "that Inuit were going to have to be modernized instead of kept in their traditional lifestyle."

Thus began the sweeping change from a traditional Inuit way of life. Having a job meant there was now pressure on Inuit workers to maintain a steady income to support their

families. That made it difficult to hunt, since people now had to travel long distances from their communities to find game.

Not being able to hunt meant Inuit had to buy their own food, either from stores or local hunters.

Food has always been expensive in the North. The population is relatively small and scattered across a vast region far from the major transportation hubs. Shipping costs are exorbitant — particularly in Nunavut, where there aren't any roads to connect the territory's communities to the rest of Canada.

The high cost of shipping food to the North put some items beyond the reach of many people.

In an effort to make food more affordable, the federal government started the Northern Air Stage Program — better known as Food Mail — in the 1960s to subsidize shipping costs.

The subsidy shifted to retailers when Nutrition North replaced Food Mail in 2011. The new program gives retailers a subsidy based on the weight of eligible foods shipped to eligible communities.

But auditor general Michael Ferguson recently found the Aboriginal Affairs Department did not choose eligible communities based on need. Instead, communities were chosen based on whether they had year-round road access and if they had used the old Food Mail program.

Those that made very little use of the program are only eligible for a partial subsidy, while those that did not use it aren't eligible at all.

"Consequently, community eligibility is based on past usage instead of current need," the audit says.

"As a result, there may be other isolated northern communities, not benefiting from the subsidy, where access to affordable, nutritious food may be an issue."

Aboriginal Affairs told Ferguson's team it has looked at expanding the full subsidy to around 50 fly-in northern communities, but doing so would increase the cost of the program by \$7 million a year.

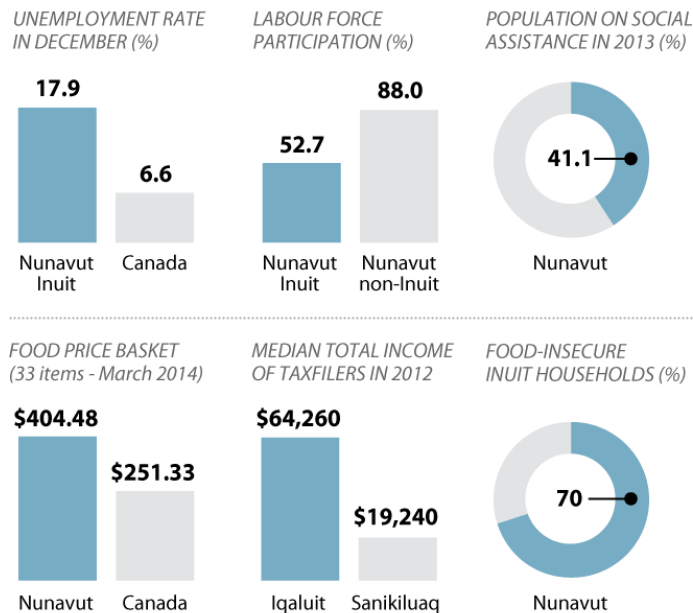
Before the audit was released in late November, the Conservative government announced it would spend another \$11.3 million on the program over the next year.

But many northerners are skeptical that businesses are actually passing on the full subsidy to customers.

Aboriginal Affairs has not required merchants to report their profit margins, which over time would indicate whether the full subsidy is being passed on. Ferguson's report said such a measure would help quell skepticism about whether consumers are actually getting the full benefit of the subsidy.

The department now says that as of April 1, retailers will have to provide information on their current and long-term profit margins.

NUNAVUT BY THE NUMBERS



SOURCE: STATISTICS CANADA; NUNAVUT BUREAU OF STATISTICS

THE CANADIAN PRESS

The cost of food has contributed to a palpable and growing sense of frustration across Nunavut.

The catalyst for much of the angst was a Facebook group called "Feeding My Family." People started posting photos of shocking price tags in grocery stores. That grew into street protests — a rare show of Inuit defiance.

"Bringing something as private as poverty and the fact that you're hungry and you're food insecure, that's very different," former Iqaluit mayor Madeleine Redfern said last month in Iqaluit.

"I think people are saying, 'This is not a hidden problem. We can't pretend it doesn't exist anymore.'"

Overwhelmingly, Redfern said, those going hungry are Inuit. "There is a disparity — not only ethnically, but also the social classes."

As of this past December, Nunavut's labour force stood at 14,000 people, 9,500 of whom are Inuit. But a closer look at the statistics shows some 8,500 working-age Inuit who are not part of the labour force, compared to only 600 non-Inuit people.

The participation rate — that is, the number of people either employed or are actively looking for a job — was also much lower among Inuit. The Inuit participation rate was 52.7 per cent, compared to 88 per cent among non-Inuit.

The unemployment rate for Inuit people in Nunavut was 17.9 per cent during the last three months of 2014 (the territory reports its statistics using a three-month moving average). By comparison, the jobless rate across the rest of Canada in December was 6.6 per cent.

The most recent figures released by the territory's statistics bureau show the number of people in Nunavut on social assistance was 14,578 in 2013.

Back in his cramped Iqaluit apartment, Mablick sips from a mug of lukewarm tea brewed with a tea bag he has already used a few times. He reuses tea bags to save money.

He hasn't eaten in a week and he turns to tea to stave off hunger pangs. He gives what little food he has to his five children, who are between the ages of one-and-a-half and 11.

Mablick, clad in a torn white Qikiqtani Inuit Association T-shirt, says he has been out of work since October.

Social assistance trickles in, but it's not enough to feed the entire household. So Mablick has been forced to sell most of his possessions to put food on the table. Parting with his snowmobile was especially difficult, he said.

"Pretty much everything that we can sell — jewellery or carvings, whatever," he said.

"I mean, I'll go to my shack, which is outside, I'll carve something and sell something, but it's been a while since I carved. I started working on a cribbage board but it's been so cold that my toes are freezing so I can't really carve anything right now."

Like many hungry people in Nunavut, Mablick also turns to friends and family for food, but knows they face their own struggles.

Traditional Inuit fare — so-called "country food" that consists of caribou, seal and whale meat — offers one option to address the food problem.

A key recommendation of the Nunavut Food Security Coalition — a group made up of representatives from the territorial government, Inuit organizations, industry and social justice groups — was to encourage people to hunt.

Former Edmonton native Will Hyndman started a hunter and trapper's market in Iqaluit, and invited hunters, most of whom struggle to buy ammunition and fuel, to sell their meat in town.

"The goal was really to change the conversation about how we deal with country food here in Iqaluit," Hyndman said, icicles forming on the tips of his moustache, as he stood with his dog on the frozen shores of Koojesse Inlet.

"When you go hunting, you can't take your fish and stuff it back down your gas tank. You can't take your seal and turn it into more bullets, whereas traditionally everything came from the animals that you were hunting.

"So now we need to something else to close that loop of sustainability, and the market was one way to do that."

People in Iqaluit also cope by turning to the city's soup kitchen or to the food bank on the two days a month that it's open.

There's clearly a demand for these services. Stephen Wallick, chairman of the board of the Niqinik Nuatsivik Food Bank, said it started out in 2001 serving about 30 families. Today, he said, as many as 120 families come looking for food and supplies every two weeks.

Iqaluit's soup kitchen, which makes enough for 200 servings a day, is also stretched to its limit — and sometimes past it.

"It goes in the red every now and then," volunteer Cathy Sawyer said during a recent visit. "Your funding sources maybe get behind, and then occasionally there's maybe extra expenses."

Case in point: Sawyer said one of the elements on her stove just stopped working, so she's going to need an electrician. "Prices for that are pretty high up here."

The most desperate — as seen in television footage that emerged after Ferguson released his report — even forage in local dumps for scraps of food.

So, what can be done?

Tester, the Arctic historian, said the territory needs to focus on online opportunities.

"They need to develop a northern economy, and as far as I'm concerned, a northern economy is online," he said.

"In other words, a web-based economy is what young people are interested in, and what has real possibility for Nunavut. Very little has been done to explore this and develop it. Instead, they're pouring tens of millions of dollars into training programs to turn people into miners."

Nunavut has slower, more expensive and more limited Internet access than most of the country — a big obstacle to developing a web-based economy. Major investments need to be undertaken to bring high-speed Internet access to the North.

The federal government is spending \$305 million over five years to develop Canadian broadband in rural and remote communities — including approximately 12,000 households in Nunavut and the Nunavik region of northern Quebec.

"The basic infrastructure is there," said Tester. "It just needs to be upgraded — big time."

Others have suggested that the federal government run a program similar to the Nunavut Hunters Income Support Trust, which provided around \$2 million a year to hunters so they could buy equipment to hunt, fish and trap.

A similar program for the Inuit of northern Quebec is fully funded through the 1975 James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement.

Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., which administers the Nunavut land claim, ran the harvesters support program. The program was shut down for 2014 so Nunavut Tunngavik could spend the rest of the year reviewing it.

Nunavut Tunngavik president Cathy Towtongie said the federal government should help offset the cost of hunting equipment in the same way it helps subsidize farmers in the rest of Canada.

"We could have a hunter support program in place. When farms do not make enough produce, farmers are given a lot of subsidies across Canada. But in Canada's Arctic, prices are rising in terms of bullets, ammunition and Ski-Doos, the equipment. So it's more costly to hunt," she said in a recent interview at her Iqaluit office.

"So if we can subsidize at least some of the cost, like bullets, then I believe we should have a program that's designed for hunters, so they can provide for the community and their families."

None of this matters much to Mablick, for whom it is a daily struggle to find his family's next meal.

"I make sure that they are fed and that there's something for them to eat instead of me, because being a parent, I make more sacrifices," he says.

"What's the point of sacrificing my kids? They're my everything. I've got to sacrifice myself for them. And that's what I do."

-- *The Canadian Press*

Direct Link: [http://www.durhamregion.com/news-story/5276414-food-cost-crisis-shames-far-north-we-can-t-pretend-it-doesn-t-exist-anymore-/](http://www.durhamregion.com/news-story/5276414-food-cost-crisis-shames-far-north-we-can-t-pretend-it-doesn-t-exist-anymore/)

Anna Maria Clement, Hippocrates Health Institute co-director, under investigation

Husband and co-director Brian Clement previously ordered to 'cease and desist'

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 06, 2015 9:45 PM ET Last Updated: Mar 06, 2015 11:34 PM ET

Anna Maria Clement, co-director of Florida's Hippocrates Health Institute, where two Ontario First Nations girls with leukemia were treated, is being investigated by health department officials for allegations of "unlicensed practice of a health-care profession," CBC News has confirmed.



Brian and Anna Maria Clement are co-directors of the Hippocrates Health Institute in Florida. Documents say the Florida Department of Health has found probable cause to believe Anna Maria Clement is practising naturopathic medicine without a licence. (Hippocrates Health Institute)

Florida's Department of Health says it has found probable cause to believe Clement is practising naturopathic medicine without a licence, according to a notice to cease and desist dated Feb. 25, 2015.

CBC News reached out to Tama Kudman, a lawyer for Anna Maria Clement Friday night, but she was not immediately available to comment.

As [CBC News previously reported](#), her husband and co-director Brian Clement faces similar allegations of misrepresenting himself as a doctor. He has been fined more than \$3,000 US for practising medicine without a license. He was given 30 days to respond to the finding and the fine.

Brian Clement has previously told CBC News he doesn't treat anyone at the institute, but rather teaches people to heal themselves.

The Department of Health says the investigation into Anna Maria Clement was sparked by a complaint from Steven Pugh, former director of nursing at the Hippocrates Health Institute.

"Pugh ... stated that Clement would tell patients not to take their medications," it says in the documents, obtained by CBC News.

Penalties for the offences alleged range from fines to jail time.

Last July, Makayla Sault, an 11-year-old who was fighting leukemia, attended Hippocrates.

She suffered a [relapse last fall](#) and died in January. Another girl with leukemia who cannot be identified left chemotherapy in August to attend Hippocrates.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/anna-maria-clement-hippocrates-health-institute-co-director-under-investigation-1.2985456>

Waterloo students make healing blankets to empower aboriginal women



Vanessa Duong and Catherine Gao write messages on the inside of their healing blankets. The pair were taking part in the Metis blanket workshop held at Wilfrid Laurier University's Aboriginal Student Centre on Friday.

By [Anam Latif](#) , Mar 06, 2015

WATERLOO — A group of people sat around a table on Friday afternoon carefully tying knots in fleece to make blankets.

They were making Métis healing blankets at Wilfrid Laurier University's Aboriginal Student Centre — a traditional process of gifting medicine and strength to a loved one.

Over a dozen students, faculty and their friends scrawled messages of strength inside the blankets with magic markers. Then with a pinch of sage, tobacco, cedar and sweet grass, the healing blankets were complete.

"It is often done around violence against women and promoting wellness," said Marie-Laurie Larivière said.

This year, she hosted the workshop as part of Laurier's annual aboriginal education week.

The Métis fourth-year psychology student said blankets are an important symbol for the Métis people.

"Almost everyone had one," she said. "The idea of having medicine inside the blanket is the idea of having everything you need."

"Métis healing blankets empower women and promote self-care," Melissa Ireland, an aboriginal student support co-ordinator, said as she taught eager participants how to make healing blankets.

Ireland and Larivière both have a lot of experience with healing blankets. Larivière said a blanket could be given to a sick friend or a family member expecting a child. Or even to yourself to promote self-care.

She said they hold special significance now more than ever because of the issue of murdered and missing aboriginal women.

"I think a lot of people don't realize the prejudices about aboriginal people," Larivière said. "It is that no one cares enough to stop and look for them."

"We have to work to change those stereotypes and universities are a great place to do it," she added.

Ireland said there are about 300 self-identified aboriginal students at Laurier's Waterloo campus. The Aboriginal Student Centre is fairly new — it opened at 187 Albert St. in 2011 — but it is always bustling with activity.

"It's about creating a space that is trying to change the lack of understanding in the Canadian population," said Jean Becker, senior adviser of Aboriginal initiatives on campus. She popped into the centre to make a blanket of her own.

Every March for the past four years, the Aboriginal Student Centre has hosted aboriginal education week. Other activities this week included raising a teepee on Monday, soup lunches, an art exhibit and lecture by Cree artist Kent Monkman and film screenings.

It is a strange coincidence that Larivière's Métis healing blanket workshop, intended to empower women, fell so close to International Women's Day.

"It is a really great coincidence," she said with a little laugh. But she does think the healing blankets are a step toward taking control.

"We need to show that we are not victims," she said.

As people took care to write meaningful messages of hope and strength in their blankets, there was little chatter and bursts of thoughtful silence.

"Create a blanket of care that will serve as a reminder that you are loved," Ireland said.

Direct Link: <http://www.therecord.com/news-story/5464847-waterloo-students-make-healing-blankets-to-empower-aboriginal-women/>

Aboriginal youth role models recognized

By [Braeden Jones](#), Grande Prairie Daily Herald-Tribune Staff

Monday, March 9, 2015 6:11:29 MDT PM



Delaine Lambert-English (left), Shelly Logan and Omarla Cooke (right) present Tutchone Dunfield with the Hayley Gardner memorial bursary at the Spirit Seekers Youth Conference awards ceremony and feast held at Grande Prairie Regional College (GPRC) on Saturday. Braeden Jones/Daily Herald-Tribune

The 16th annual Spirit Seekers Youth Conference was a hit for all who attended say organizers.

Conference organizer Delaine Lambert-English said youth from Alberta, the Northwest Territories and British Columbia attended the conference this past weekend at Grande Prairie Regional College.

Registration was down slightly from last year. Close to 160 registrants took part in the workshops at GPRC on Saturday for the conference hosted by the Grande Prairie Friendship Centre in partnership with GPRC.

Lambert-English said the numbers fluctuate normally, and after seven years of organizing the conference she's seen it take different shapes.

"It keeps getting...not better every year, but different. It takes a new form and I really enjoyed this year's conference," she said.

The theme, Embrace Opportunity, was used in the workshops and was the subject of city councillor Chris Thiessen's keynote address Friday night.

Thiessen urged youth to become "social pioneers," and to carve out their own path of being involved in their communities.

Lambert-English said the youth attending embraced the opportunity the conference provided.

"Something I was really proud of this year was behaviour of the youth, they were so kind and respectful and helpful," she said. "There was a really good energy around the conference, everyone was in such a good mood."

From the opening ceremonies Friday night featuring youth performers and a performance from the talented Blue Bird Dance group, to the closing round-dance Saturday evening, Lambert-English said the conference was a successful celebration of youth and culture.

Awards

The conference wrapped up Saturday night with the Aboriginal Youth Role Model awards presentation and two scholarship presentations.

The first scholarship awarded, the Hayley Gardner Outstanding Youth award, went to Tutchone Dunfield.

Offered for the first time last year, the \$200 award was matched for 2015 by Metis Local 1990, making it a \$400 bursary.

The Melodie Wilton service award, a \$1,000 one-time bursary for use at GPRC, went to Judy Gouchey.

The award was established in the memory of Wilton, a late director of the friendship centre who passed in 2012.

Dione McGuinness, the coordinator of aboriginal and stakeholder engagement for major conference sponsor, Conoco Phillips, presented the annual aboriginal youth role model awards.

Lambert-English said the awards went to youth who are “really excelling” in one of the eight award categories.

Awards were further divided up to both “senior” and “junior” youth.

Lambert-English said there were more than 35 nominations from parents, community members, and community agencies.

AWARD WINNERS

Sixteen youth were recognized for their achievements and contributions with youth role model awards.

Athletics

Junior- Heaven Goodswimmer-Ferguson

Senior- Nevada Rain

Academic Achievement

Junior- Tyrone Chowace

Senior- Leroy Catholique

Academic Excellence

Junior- Colten Hodak

Senior- Jennifer Houlihan

Culture and Heritage

Junior- Charlee Soto

Senior- Morris Crow Jr.

Health and Wellness

Junior- Seth Goodswimmer-Fergusson

Senior- Ashley Rosenberger

Career and Employment

Junior- Cale Lindstrom

Senior- James Cardinal

Arts, Music and Creativity

Junior- Vanessa Cardinal

Senior- Tyler Lizotte

Community Service

Junior - Spencer Diederich

Senior -Garred Taneton

Direct Link: <http://www.dailyheraldtribune.com/2015/03/09/aboriginal-youth-role-models-recognized>

First Nations woman claims spruce gum cured cancer

By Mitch Wiles, [CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 10, 2015 10:40 AM CT Last Updated: Mar 10, 2015 8:10 PM CT



Instead of accepting standard treatment and a hysterectomy, Catherine Boucher of Fort Resolution, N.W.T., woman took the advice of her late grandfather. 'I heard him in my ear telling me to use spruce gum.' (Mitch Wiles/CBC)

EDITORS NOTE: This story was published before the reporting was complete. CBC North is still pursuing reaction to this story from Catherine Boucher's doctors and any medical professionals who heard her story at the Weaving our Wisdom gathering in Yellowknife. If you were there, please contact managing editor [Archie McLean](#).

Catherine Boucher was diagnosed with a rare cervical cancer in 2003.

Instead of accepting standard treatment and a hysterectomy, the Fort Resolution, N.W.T., woman took the advice of her late grandfather.

"I heard him in my ear telling me to use spruce gum."

The medical community may be skeptical, but Boucher says her grandfather used to take her out on the land and teach her about natural medicines, including spruce gum, which has been used as a traditional medicine for generations.



Boucher says traditionally the gum was boiled in tea, but she thinks eating it raw makes it more effective as a medicine. 'I froze it all, put it in a big bowl, crushed it all, made it look like sugar.' (Mitch Wiles/CBC)

Spruce gum is dried tree resin. Trees exude resin to heal any damage to its trunk.

Boucher says traditionally the gum was boiled in tea, but she thinks eating it raw makes it more effective as a medicine.

"I froze it all, put it in a big bowl, crushed it all, made it look like sugar, and that's how I took my spruce gum."

Boucher ate a tablespoon of crushed resin every 12 hours. Within six months, Boucher's doctor at the Cross Cancer Institute told her that her cancer was shrinking.

"When she told me my cancer was shrinking, I decided not to have the operation and I would just carry on with my spruce gum."

She's now been cancer free since 2008.

"I don't know what is in there, but there has to be something in there to cure," Boucher says. "It's pure I guess."

Boucher shared her story with doctors last week at a wellness conference in Yellowknife.

The doctors involved in Boucher's case did not return calls for comment, but one doctor who researches holistic medicine at the University of British Columbia's School of Population and Public Health says she's not convinced Boucher has found a new cure for cancer.

"There is usually more than one explanation for that kind of reality," says Dr. Farah Shroff.

Shroff says she doesn't want to discredit Boucher's claim, but an improved diet, more exercise and a positive state of mind could have played into Boucher's recovery.

"The human mind is a very very powerful tool that we can harness in our healing."

Meanwhile, Boucher is still taking the gum regularly and hopes other people will give it a try.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/first-nations-woman-claims-spruce-gum-cured-cancer-1.2988970>

Aboriginal Identity & Representation

Aboriginal mom fights officialdom over spelling of daughter's name: Sahai?a

N.W.T. government argues Chipewyan name with non-standard characters makes it impossible to issue birth certificate or passport.



Shene Catholique-Valpy poses with her one-year-old daughter, to whom she has given the traditional Chipewyan name Sahai?a. The Northwest Territories government has refused to register the girl under that name, saying that all names must be spelled using the standard Roman alphabet.

By: The Canadian Press, Published on Fri Mar 06 2015

YELLOWKNIFE—A northern woman is fighting with the government of the Northwest Territories to register her infant daughter under her aboriginal name.

“It’s important to me because that’s our language,” said Shene Catholique-Valpy. “I’m keeping it alive through her.”

Catholique-Valpy and her partner are going to school in Red Deer, Alta., but the two decided before the birth of their baby last year to return to their Yellowknife home so their child would have an N.W.T. birth certificate. After her daughter was born on Feb. 15, 2014, Valpy decided she wanted to give her a traditional Chipewyan name.

The name she chose means “when the sun peaks through.”

Spelling it properly requires a character that doesn’t exist in the Roman alphabet. Resembling a question mark without a period at the bottom, the character signifies a glottal stop in pronunciation.

The closest normal keyboards can come is Sahai?a, roughly pronounced “sah-HYE’-uh” — “kind of like an uhhh at the end of it,” Catholique-Valpy said.

[The territory's Vital Statistics Department](#) told her she couldn't register her baby under that name. It said Roman characters are legally required for names because they have to appear on official federal documents.

"Our research to date has shown that the letters and symbols used on a birth certificate have to be recognized by the federal government for a passport to be issued," said department spokesman Damien Healy in an email.

"Using letters or symbols that are not recognized by the federal government — or by other jurisdictions in Canada — on a birth certificate would create difficulties with obtaining identification documents later in life."

Shene Catholique-Valpy discusses her struggle

Sahai?a has never been legally registered, which means her mother can't get a health card for her daughter and has had to pay out of pocket for medical expenses. She also can't claim Sahai?a [as a dependent for tax purposes](#).

"I'm a student and only one of us works, so it's a bit much."

Part of the reason she's adamant to call her daughter by a Chipewyan name is that her own traditional name was lost.

"Catholique" — now a common name in the N.W.T. — was originally "Gahdele," which was misheard and mistranslated by missionary priests.

Catholique-Valpy said she didn't think her daughter's name would cause such difficulties. Nine of the territory's 11 official languages are aboriginal and it's common to see non-standard characters on documents and buildings.

Healy said the department is working with Ottawa to see if it's possible to allow such characters on official documents. The issue raises both technical and economic issues, he said.

"In the event that the fonts cannot be accepted by the federal government, the department will have to continue to produce a birth certificate that only includes the Roman alphabet," he said.

"Producing two legal documents such as a birth certificate is not doable."

Catholique-Valpy has hired a lawyer.

She realizes her daughter will eventually have to use a Roman spelling, if only so she can do things like buy an airplane ticket to visit her grandparents in Yellowknife. But acknowledgment of the aboriginal name would be nice.

“I’m going to try and get both spellings on her birth certificate.”

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2015/03/06/nwt-wont-recognize-infants-aboriginal-name.html>

Settlers claiming Métis heritage because they just feel more Indigenous

By

[Âpihtawikosisân](#)

| March 11, 2015



In 2009, John Ralston Saul tried to whip together a cohesive Canadian identity in [A Fair Country: Telling Truths about Canada](#), using the Métis as a synecdoche for ‘a unique people’ (i.e. Canadians). He argued that Canadian culture was less a result of English and French Enlightenment values, and more of a result of interactions between English and French newcomers and First Nations. To call this a rosy reading of history is an understatement as vast as the Mariana Trench. The goal of this approach is to encourage Canadians to “learn who they truly are” via reconnecting with their Indigenous roots. Real, or very much imagined.

More perplexing, to those of us who are actually Métis, was the choice to discuss Canada as a “Métis Nation”. Why us? Why the Métis, as opposed to say, the Cree, or the Mohawk, or the Inuit? Why is our nation so attractive to those seeking an Indigenous identity? I’ve previously discussed some of the [issues with defining Métis identity](#), but it basically boils down to the fact that for many people, Métis = mixed. After all, that’s what the French word means, and that is almost exclusively how we are discussed in the mainstream; as a hybrid people formed from the unions between European men and First Nations women. Just us. Apparently we’re the only ones who married out, interbred, mixed. So anyone with a single Indigenous ancestor 300 years ago is mixed, thus Métis.

I hope it is obvious that this [claim is ridiculous](#). Unfortunately, this is precisely the kind of mythology discussed by E. Tuck and K.W. Yang as a “move to innocence”, in their must read piece [Decolonization is Not a Metaphor](#):

In this move to innocence, settlers locate or invent a long-lost ancestor who is rumored to have had "Indian blood," and they use this claim to mark themselves as blameless in the attempted eradications of Indigenous peoples...

...[it] is a settler move to innocence because it is an attempt to deflect a settler identity, while continuing to enjoy settler privilege and occupying stolen land.

While there are certainly people claiming a First Nations identity based on blood myths (long-lost or imagined ancestors), it tends to be a less common phenomenon in Canada than is perhaps the case in the United States. Part of that, at least where I come from, is a deep-rooted racism against Indigenous peoples that makes being Indigenous in no way an enviable or sought-out identity.

Since moving to eastern Canada however, I have seen that deep-rooted racism expressed in forms that encourage stereotypes of noble savagery, and claiming Indigenous identity is much more hip, and edgy. Perhaps it is a rural versus urban phenomenon? In any case it is still difficult to claim one is Mohawk, or Mi'gmaq or Cree without a person from one of those First Nations asking pointed questions about relatives and community. Much easier to avoid a fuss and simply claim that any tiny scrap of Indigenous blood (again real or imagined) makes one "Métis". In this way, our nation becomes a bin for all those who are "not otherwise defined".

The problem with this is of course the fact that many of the people claiming us, are not claimed BY us. Self-identification is not enough. As an Indigenous people, the Métis have the right to define our own kinships, without having anyone who wishes come along and successfully claim kinship with us. We are often accused of furthering colonial goals by speaking out about the misuse of our identity as a "catch-all" for those who otherwise find themselves without a clear Indigenous label. Oddly enough, these same accusations are rarely hurled at First Nations who also have the right to question those who self-identify as being part of their nation. Feel free to claim that having a Mohawk ancestor 300 years ago makes you Mohawk. See how far that takes you.

Recently, the mythology of Métissage has reared its head in a very aggressive way in Quebec. While the flavour is different than Saul's claims (more maple syrup, obviously), the story is roughly the same. Some people, merely by *feeling* more Indigenous than French, want to identify as Métis. Unique. Not French (European), but *something else*. Something that belongs here. Something that does not engender guilt. Something that washes away Quebec's history of colonialism while reinforcing Quebec's own experiences as a colonized people.

In fact, Roy Dupuis, Carole Poliquin and Yvan Dubuc have [an entire film](#) about the Québécois-as-Métis called *L'empreinte*. In [interviews](#), Dupuis has stressed that the French did not come to Quebec as conquerors, and that they were charmed by the "sexual liberation of les sauvagesses" (Indigenous women). Much like Ralston Saul, Dubuc and Poliquin claim that Quebec's tolerance for differences ([Islamophobia](#) and a penchant for

continuing to champion the use of [blackface](#) aside) consensus seeking, and love of nature all come from the mixture of cultures; European and First Nations.

All of that would be lovely to acknowledge, true or not, if it weren't for the way in which such claims are used to claim the Québécois as Indigenous. Yes please, stop viewing Indigenous peoples as "the other", but do not replace that with "we are all Indigenous".

"Si les Français sont nos cousins, les Amérindiens sont nos frères." [says Dupuis](#) (if the French are our cousins, the Indians are our brothers).

Quels seraient les avantages de cette redéfinition? Énormes, croient-ils. « Comme le dit Denys Delâge dans le film, reconnaître cet héritage voudrait dire que notre histoire n'a pas commencé avec l'arrivée de Champlain, mais il y a 12 000 ans, dit Roy Dupuis.

(What would advantages of such a redefinition be? They believe them to be enormous. "As Denys Delâge said in the film, recognizing this heritage means our history did not begin with the arrival of Champlain, but rather is 12,000 years old!" says Roy Dupuis.)

Others are not so quick to jump on the bandwagon of imagined Québécois Indigeneity. [Gérard Bouchard](#) points out the obvious; that Indigenous communities in Quebec are in general far removed from where the Québécois live/lived, that the Roman Catholic Church always discouraged mixed unions with First Nations, and that First Nations genes represent a mere one per cent of the Quebec genetic makeup.

And yet, the myth of Métissage holds a powerful sway. As Dupuis says [in this trailer](#):

"When I arrived in America, I was French, but before long, I no longer lived nor thought like a Frenchman ... I was Canadian, from the Iroquois name Kanata. My tribe has given itself other names since -- French Canadian, then Québécois ..."

In [another](#) interview, Dupuis was asked, "Are you more French or Indian?" To which he replied, "Indian".

Don't get me wrong. Dupuis is just one more manifestation of a burning desire to claim Indigeneity, and is hardly the only person involved in furthering such claims. However, this move to innocence is far from harmless. A great deal of time, effort and research is being put into claiming Indigeneity via very strained genealogical ties (for example, claiming a [Mi'kmaq Métis ancestor from 1684](#)) when that effort could much better be extended in developing healthy relationships with existing Indigenous communities both in Quebec, and throughout Canada.

"Becoming the Native" is ongoing colonialism and erasure of Indigenous peoples, and the fact that this is being done more and more through the lens of Métissage is of particular concern to Métis people. We are being used as a wedge to undermine Indigenous rights and existence (including our own!). It is no wonder then that we are

under attack by "scholars" and "historians" who insist that we cannot define who is Métis; that we must make room for communities who wish to self-identify as Métis.

The stakes are high. If enough people attain "Métishood", it is not inconceivable that the population of "Métis" could outnumber First Nations and Inuit combined, and make us a driving political force when it comes to Indigenous issues. Of course, the agenda would be driven by Settler, not Indigenous needs as we too would become a minority within our own nation. Further, the claiming of Indigeneity by Settler populations means circumventing any need to engage in decolonization.

So expect this topic to pop up again, because one thing is clear: Canadian (or Quebec) myth-making is far from over.

Direct Link: <http://rabble.ca/blogs/bloggers/apihtawikosisan/2015/03/settlers-claiming-m%C3%A9tis-heritage-because-they-just-feel-more->

Anti-racism art project makes Winnipeg its exhibit space

By [Shannon Cuciz](#) Reporter Global News, March 11, 2015 1:58 pm



WINNIPEG — A Winnipeg artist is hoping to combat negative stereotypes of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people with a photo series called Perception.

The project features various indigenous people in Winnipeg sharing their stories and aims to document a different perspective while starting positive conversation.

“I’m taking photos of close up faces and we all respond to faces,” said Winnipeg-based visual artist KC Adams.

Adams shows each model in two different pictures.



“What I’m saying on the left side photo is... racial slurs or stereotypes at them which will hurt,” said Adams. “I ask them to not act and to think about my words... I’m focused on the eyes.”

For the second photo, she asks models to think about something positive in their lives. The second photo is supposed to be an actual representation of the person.

“I just want people to realize... there’s so much more than just their hair colour or the colour of their skin, there’s that person inside that has feelings,” said model Renee McGurry.

Adams started the project last summer and coincidentally released the photos the weekend that 15-year-old Tina Fontaine’s body was found in the Red River.

After posting the photos on social media, Adams was contacted by Urban Shaman Gallery, an artist-run centre in Winnipeg that wanted to get involved.

The public project will launch not long after Winnipeg was profiled in national news magazine *Maclean’s* as possibly the most racist city in Canada, and as the conversation surrounding missing and murdered indigenous women continues.

The series will spread across Winnipeg for six weeks starting March 19. First the photos will appear on building video screens, then on bus shelters and eventually on billboards.

Adams is working with Urban Shaman Gallery to raise \$30,000 to allow similar projects to be done in future years, with a goal of making a positive difference in the city.

“To look at other opportunities that we can do, partnering with the city and others in the city to be able to use art as a way to be able to talk about issues in our city,” said president of Urban Shaman Gallery Marcel Balfour.

The city and organizations such as United Way of Winnipeg, the Winnipeg Foundation and the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce are currently helping to support the project.

A crowdfunding campaign will also be launched to raise money to showcase the photos.

Direct Link: <http://globalnews.ca/news/1876431/anti-racism-art-project-makes-winnipeg-its-exhibit-space/>

N.W.T. Health minister seeks fix for aboriginal names

'I don't anticipate it will be easy,' says Glen Abernethy on registering Dene names

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 11, 2015 12:47 PM CT Last Updated: Mar 11, 2015 12:47 PM CT



Sahai?a May Talbot went without a birth certificate for more than a year due to the Government of the Northwest Territories being unable to register a surname that is not written entirely in the Roman alphabet. (Submitted by Shene Catholique Valpy)

The N.W.T.'s minister of Health and Social Services, says it's perfectly reasonable for residents to expect to be able to register aboriginal baby names, but making it possible won't be easy.

"I would like to find a way," says Glen Abernethy. "Ultimately, we respect aboriginal languages here in the N.W.T. and aboriginal language and culture is a priority for the government. We do recognize 11 official languages. This is why we're attempting to resolve the problem."

Abernethy says he "appreciates and admires" the efforts of Shene Catholique Valpy, the [mother of one-year-old Sahai?a May Talbot](#), to raise awareness of the problem.

When Valpy attempted to register her daughter's birth, she was told that only characters in the Roman alphabet would be accepted. Sahai?a's name includes a glottal stop, a symbol used in the Chipewyan language that signifies both pronunciation and meaning.



N.W.T. Health Minister Glen Abernethy: 'I don't anticipate it will be easy.' (Chantal Dubuc/CBC)

Abernethy says he's directed his department to look into possible regional solutions, such as registering the name without it being part of an official legal document. But, he says, even if there were a regional fix, it could create problems down the road, as other jurisdictions may not have the same systems.

"We need to make sure that those individuals with the fonts in their names aren't disadvantaged when they want to go to college outside the N.W.T. or travel abroad or get a social insurance number."

Abernethy noted that the N.W.T. government uses Dene fonts within the territory all the time, for example, in the names of many buildings.

He said officials in his department are working with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and are talking to the federal government about possible solutions, without offering a timeline on when those solutions might be implemented.

"I don't anticipate it will be easy," he said. "It's not a simple fix."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/n-w-t-health-minister-seeks-fix-for-aboriginal-names-1.2990743>

Ask don't take: Let's elevate our conversation on First Nations



The Mississauga Chiefs are one of six local hockey teams that have a First Nations-inspired nickname and/or logo.

Mississauga News

By [Jason Spencer](#)

MISSISSAUGA – It's time to re-examine the seemingly innocuous use of First Nations names and symbols for local sports teams.

It's a sensitive topic that needs to transcend political correctness and move into a more mature, solutions-based discussion.

A local father who recently pulled his two daughters out of the Mississauga Chiefs hockey club because he was offended by the team's branding pointed out to The News that our city is home to six of eight bantam rep hockey teams still using what he feels is offensive First Nations-inspired names or imagery provincially.

That number appears small, but when you consider that it's out of a pool of more than 200 male and female teams in Ontario, it's worth examining.

The local clubs likely started using the symbols and names in question as a tribute to Mississauga's aboriginal history – a link which broke in 1847 when an Ojibwa band known as the Mississaugas relocated to Hagersville, Ont., becoming the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation when they couldn't get the title to their land at the Credit Mission site.

If you look at the unfavourable circumstances under which the Mississaugas left the city – facing extinction by way of disease, alcoholism, loss of land through treaties and a

government-built reserve to integrate them into European life – the tradition card is not so squeaky clean.

That said, is a First Nations past on this land a good enough reason to hijack another group's symbols?

For those who say no, the fact that one side has a record of taking without permission just adds insult to injury, noted Paul Racher, a Kitchener-based archeologist.

"It would be one thing if a lacrosse team from New Credit or Six Nations wanted to call itself the Chiefs, it's something else when the colonial society decides to use it," said Racher, who studies First Peoples in Ontario.

It's a valid distinction: the upcoming Little Native Hockey Tournament takes place later on this month at the Hershey Centre and the participating First Nations youth hockey teams obviously have every right to use their own symbolism.

Racher pointed out that negative historical representations of First Nations people by non-aboriginal people "permeate everything," but sports mascots, such as the one for Cleveland Indians in Major League Baseball, also reveal a double standard.

"If a team's going to be the Grizzlies for instance, then the grizzlies get to be fierce and big and daunting and scary to opponents. If the team is the Indians out of Cleveland, then what does that logo say? 'Here's a bunch of ridiculous buffoons.'"

Carolyn King, former chief (1997-99) of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation, would particularly like to see the "ugly Indian head" used as a mascot by the Mississaugua Golf and Country Club (former site of the the Credit Mission reserve) removed. She said it's a "good step" that the private club took the logo off their website.

Though King has not formally protested the First Nations-inspired names and logos used by some Mississauga hockey teams, she is not in favour of them.

"We have basically said that we're not happy with those things and just kind of left it at that," said King, who currently serves as cultural co-chair of the New Credit Culture Committee, an arms-length group from the New Credit Council.

"We just expressed that those things are not appropriate, but they continue to use them."

Though King is not aware of any real dialogue about making a change, the Mississauga Chiefs President told The News that New Credit was consulted while drafting up the team's latest arrowhead logo, which has been in use for about four years.

Asking for permission is something that King suggests, noting that the Mississauga Canoe Club did just that while she was still serving as chief.

"Ask permission, use (our name) and use it with respect," she said, noting that New Credit's name and emblem is protected under copyright.

Racher said there have been promising signs of progress: Supreme Court decisions require large building projects to consult aboriginal peoples when they impact treaty rights, as well as a new Provincial Policy Statement that also requires consultation before development takes place.

Moving forward, he foresees aboriginal groups also moving to protect their intellectual property rights, not just their land.

"I can see a future in which First Nations, to put it in business terms, protect their brand and how their brand is dealt with in popular culture and in terms of representation in art and team logos," he said.

This is exciting new territory to explore, but the soil must first be prepared to acknowledge what Racher calls our country's "original sin" that is our "treatment of First Peoples."

That symbolic gesture will inevitably elevate the conversation to brighter heights.

(Note: After decades of use, The Mississauga News removed its original logo about a year ago. It featured a First Nations person wearing a headdress, resembling a Plains aboriginal person, not a member of the Mississaugas. The decision was made after consultations with New Credit council members.)

Direct Link: <http://www.mississauga.com/news-story/5474400-ask-don-t-take-let-s-elevate-our-conversation-on-first-nations/>

University of Alberta teepee vandalized with toilet paper

By Otiena Ellwand, Edmonton Journal March 11, 2015



Teepee poles at the University of Alberta were vandalized over the weekend with toilet paper.

Teepee poles at the University of Alberta were vandalized over the weekend with toilet paper, an act of disrespect that targets indigenous people, said the dean of the faculty of native studies.

The faculty said toilet paper was wrapped and taped around the teepee poles some time between Saturday and Sunday.

Friday was the last day of a special memorial display honouring murdered and missing aboriginal women, girls and two spirit persons. Dean Brendan Hokowhitu said it was disturbing the vandalism occurred on the heels of this display.

“(It) has caused indigenous and non-indigenous students, staff and faculty hurt, fear and discomfort,” Hokowhitu said in a written statement.

Teepee poles and the surrounding space are significant for many reasons and represent a sacred space where people gather.

The faculty said in a statement condemned the act of vandalism against university property and described it as a serious breach of university policies and procedures if perpetrated by a member of the university community. Officials urged the people responsible to own up to their actions.

The faculty has asked the university’s protective services and the Edmonton police to investigate. It also is working with the university and consulting local elders on what steps to take next.

“This disrespectful and ignorant behaviour cannot be tolerated on this campus, regardless of the motivation,” said U of A president Indira Samarasekera.

“The university stands in support of our indigenous students, faculty and staff. We value diversity, inclusion and safe spaces for all members of our community. “

Direct Link:

<http://www.edmontonjournal.com/University+Alberta+teepee+vandalized+with+toilet+paper/10880244/story.html>

Aboriginal Inequality & Poverty

Oshawa school food drive benefits northern Ontario First Nations

Oshawa students shocked by the high cost of food in northern Ontario

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 06, 2015 6:00 AM ET Last Updated: Mar 06, 2015 6:00 AM ET



The Aboriginal Awareness Club at Norman G. Powers Public School in Oshawa show off some of the donations they've collected to send to remote First Nations, north of Thunder Bay, Ont. (Rachel Cosford)

Some families living in remote northern Ontario First Nations will get a break from their expensive grocery bills, thanks to the Aboriginal Awareness Club at Norman G. Powers Public School in Oshawa.

The school is collecting food to send to communities north of Thunder Bay.

Learning how expensive food is in those communities inspired student student Shannon Reilly to help.

"It just sounded horrible. Like for them to get bottles of water, it is \$104 so they have a hard time affording healthy food, and I just thought it was horrible," Reilly said.



Teacher Rachel Cosford is the co-facilitator of the Aboriginal Awareness Club at Norman G. Powers Public School in Oshawa, Ont. (Submitted)

The club's co-facilitator, teacher Rachel Cosford, said she got the idea for the initiative after reading about the high cost of groceries in the North.

Cosford, whose father lives in the Mississauga First Nation near Blind River, Ont., founded the Aboriginal Awareness Club with history teacher Bryan Thomas, in an effort to teach students more about aboriginal history and culture.

More than just charity

"We're teaching them about residential schools and so we're giving them a little bit of an idea of why there might be issues in the first place and giving them a little bit of history and background," Cosford said.

The group has planned a trip to the Woodland Cultural Centre in Brantford, Ont. to continue that learning, she added.

Cosford said she also obtained a letter that students could sign from the group Feeding My Family, urging government to take action on northern food prices.

In addition to non-perishable food items, the group is collecting toiletries, diapers, formula and other necessities for northern First Nations.

The Regional Food Distribution Association in Thunder Bay will allocate the donations.

Cosford has not spoken directly with the leadership of any communities who would benefit from the group's efforts, she said.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/oshawa-school-food-drive-benefits-northern-ontario-first-nations-1.2981940>

Poor quality of aboriginal housing can lead to health issues, Edmonton keynote speaker says

By Alicja Siekierska, Edmonton Journal March 9, 2015



Dr. James Makokis is a keynote speaker at the 2015 Aboriginal Gathering.

EDMONTON - About 150 people from different organizations, service providers and community groups met Monday for the 2015 Aboriginal Gathering to discuss how to help the city's overwhelmingly aboriginal homeless population.

According to the October 2014 Homeless Count conducted by the Homeward Trust Edmonton, 47 per cent of the city's homeless population is aboriginal.

"There's still a lot of work to do," said Susan McGee, CEO of Homeward Trust Edmonton. "While there are presentations that focus on progress, there's also a real need for us to look at what we need to do better."

Dr. James Makokis, an aboriginal family physician at Saddle Lake Health Care Centre on the Saddle Lake Cree Nation, spoke to the Journal ahead of his keynote address Monday and touched upon the importance of improving aboriginal housing. This interview has been edited and condensed for clarity.

Q: What do you think of the fact that 47 per cent of Edmonton's homeless population is aboriginal?

A: It's not surprising. We know that in many communities the housing that is provided through the Department of Aboriginal Affairs is significantly lower than the population's needs and expectations. If you look at the population demographics, we have one of the fastest growing populations.

Q: What are some important issues that need to be addressed?

A: Unfortunately, the housing that is often provided is not quality housing. It just perpetuates health issues. People end up coming to see me with upper respiratory tract infections, skin infections and other issues that are inherently connected to poor housing.

Q: What have you noticed about aboriginal homelessness in Edmonton?

A: It's very expensive in rural areas and people often end up coming to Edmonton in the hopes of having a better opportunity for themselves and their families. Instead, they end up working poor, couch-surfing or homeless.

Q: What stands out to you about the homeless aboriginal population?

A: Our two-spirit population — those individuals that are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered — are overrepresented in the homeless population. We need to look at creative ways of housing those that are two-spirited. This should be addressed when we create new programs — if it's not, it will just continue.

Q: Why is this Aboriginal Gathering so important?

A: It's important to hear of new and innovative methods that people are using to address homelessness and housing. We need to look within our communities, see what strengths we have, and build upon them.

Direct Link:

<http://www.edmontonjournal.com/Poor+quality+aboriginal+housing+lead+health+issues+Edmonton+keynote+speaker+says/10875345/story.html>

Aboriginal Jobs & Labour

Aboriginal workers, firms hit by Alberta oil slowdown

Communities benefited from resource boom but face an unclear future

By Kyle Bakx, [CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 10, 2015 5:00 AM ET Last Updated: Mar 10, 2015 5:00 AM ET

Métis elder Yvonne McCallum has never really welcomed Big Oil into her community, but she accepts how important the energy industry has become to her people.

McCallum is the youngest elder in the community of Conklin, Alta, where her family has lived for several generations.

For the 350 residents of Conklin, the oilsands are overwhelmingly the main employer. Oil prices have plunged by 50 per cent in the last year.

'A lot of assessment is being made on any future work that we had' - *Nicole Bouchier, CEO of the Bouchier Group*

"The local contractors here are all dependent on [the] industry," says McCallum.

"When the economy started to go down, we felt it here at this level too. Local contractors started getting letters from the big industry guys asking them to cut back on pricing. But we've been pretty much promised that they will keep the local contractors right until the bitter end, provided they still maintain the quality of service."

Conklin is located near the shores of Christina Lake, about 150 km south of Fort McMurray in northern Alberta, the heart of Canada's oil patch.

The rural town is surrounded by oilsands operations. Nine big-name energy companies operate in the area, including Canadian Natural Resources, CNOOC Nexen, MEG Energy and Cenovus.

Those companies are all slashing expenses. MEG Energy, for example, had originally planned \$1.2 billion in capital spending in 2015. The Calgary-based firm now expects to spend just \$305 million, a cut of about 75 per cent. The company nonetheless expects to boost oil production by approximately 19 per cent this year.



Métis elder Yvonne McCallum says contractors in Conklin, Alta., are being asked to cut costs because of low oil prices. (Kyle Bakx/CBC)

Decades ago, people living in the Métis town of Conklin found work in forestry and fishing. When the oil industry moved in, employment in the energy sector began to soar.

Aboriginal groups throughout the region have reaped the financial gain. Conklin signed a 2011 agreement with Cenovus, worth an estimated \$50 million over 40 years, tied to the growth of oil production from nearby projects. It's a royalty of sorts, since the more the company produces, the greater the benefit for the community.

The Fort McMurray area is home to several successful aboriginal-operated companies that service the oilsands industry. Those companies have not been immune to the oil price collapse.

Facing uncertainty

"A lot of attention is being paid to current contracts, working with our clients to look at cost reductions of those contracts," says Nicole Bouchier, CEO of the Bouchier Group, a construction and maintenance company based in Fort McKay, about 50 km north of Fort McMurray.

"A lot of assessment is being made on any future work that we had — definitely changes in the amount of work that was coming our way and the amount of work in the area overall. We're hearing from clients that projects are under review and are not sure if certain projects will go ahead."



Construction continues in Northern Alberta's energy sector, including this new Enbridge pipeline in the area between Fort McMurray and Conklin. (Kyle Bakx/CBC)

It's a change of pace for the company, which was gearing up for substantial growth. Instead, it recently laid off nine employees from head office and dismissed some of its seasonal workers much earlier than normal.

But Bouchier says 2015 could still be a growth year if the company's bids on some new projects are accepted.

"You are seeing a lot of people uneasy and a little nervous because they don't know what the downturn in the economy will mean in the long term," she says.

"At the same time, you see local folks that have been here a long time, it's a bit of a refresher to have the community slow down. It was going at such a fast pace and I think this gives everyone the opportunity to slow things down and bring things into perspective."

In Conklin, people continue to discuss the price of oil, but for now they are able to make ends meet.

The oilsands companies not only provide jobs, but they also spend money to enhance education and other programs in local communities. Conklin is surrounded by steam-assisted gravity drainage (SAGD) oilsands operations, which use steam to extract buried bitumen.

McCallum wonders what long-term environmental impact the oilsands will have to the land and water. It's too late now, she says, to raise a fuss.

"It's something that is here now, we have to deal with it. We can't squawk, we can't chase anyone away, we just have to live with the fact we are the most impacted people as far as SAGD goes in North America. That's my opinion, but I don't think anyone would disagree."



About 350 people live in Conklin and the surrounding area. (Kyle Bakx/CBC)

The small town has a handful of roads, connecting the few dozen homes to the gas station, post office and community centre. The community school is in a large log cabin, while the high school is in a one-room modular building recently donated by an oil company.

"I can't say we feel it very bad, we still go about our daily business," says Shirley Tremblay, president of Conklin Métis Local 193, which represents the people in the community. "I think everyone is still doing what they used to do. I don't think they have slowed down too much."

Nobody seems to have heard of anyone in this community being laid off since oil prices began to crash last summer.

The financial impact may still not have been fully felt.

As Tremblay bluntly points out, oil industry employment "is a biggie."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/business/aboriginal-workers-firms-hit-by-alberta-oil-slowdown-1.2982815>

Budget limits create logistical challenge for First Nations labour data

TAVIA GRANT

The Globe and Mail

Published Tuesday, Mar. 10 2015, 6:07 PM EDT

Last updated Tuesday, Mar. 10 2015, 6:17 PM EDT

The head of Statistics Canada says it would be costly and difficult to collect monthly labour statistics on First Nations reserves – but that it’s “entirely possible” to collect the data on an annual basis, provided there’s government will and enough funding.

Canada does not collect monthly statistics on First Nations reserves as part of its labour force survey, an omission Statscan says is largely due to high costs of gathering data from remote areas. This means about half of the country’s First Nations population does not show up in the data, making it difficult to determine jobless rates or the effectiveness of various government programs.

That statistical gap is unlikely to change any time soon. The country’s labour force survey is intended to give a “quick, accurate and timely measure” of job market conditions – while gathered at an affordable price, said Wayne Smith, chief statistician of Statistics Canada in a Feb. 23 interview in Ottawa.

It would prove difficult to sample all reserves on a monthly basis, he said.

“You cannot modify the labour force survey to generate estimates for all reserves in Canada, monthly,” Mr. Smith said. The task is too huge, the costs are too large and the complications are too enormous for us to be able to do that.”

For now, labour market data on one of Canada’s fastest-growing populations (with one of the highest rates of joblessness) comes only every five years, in what used to be the long-form census and is now called the national household survey. Some experts say that information is unreliable because the NHS is a voluntary survey.

But Mr. Smith said the agency’s canvassers visited every household on reserves for the NHS in 2011 in which it was granted permission or was able to due to weather conditions, rather than conducting a sample, making it a “a very comprehensive view of labour market conditions on reserve.” It also sent in-person canvassers to Inuit communities. In the 2011 survey, 36 First Nations reserves and settlements didn’t participate or were incompletely enumerated, compared with 22 in the 2006 census.

The jobless rate for the working-age on-reserve status Indian population, at 22 per cent, was nearly quadruple the rate for other Canadians, the NHS showed.

If once every five years isn’t enough, however, Mr. Smith said it is “entirely possible” to collect information on a more frequent basis. It’s just a question of funding – and whether any government department deems this a priority.

“It comes down to the people who are trying to address this need to make a recommendation that this survey should be done more frequently than just the time of the census. And that being the case, then it’s possible. But Statscan couldn’t undertake a survey that large with its existing resources,” he said.

“Really, it’s the people who – the policy-makers and the decision makers who need the data – if they really believe they need it on a more frequent basis than provided from the census, they need to articulate that, win the support of the government and we need the access to the resources necessary to do it. It’s entirely doable. And I’m not diminishing the importance of the problem ... if I could solve it with a minor investment of my own, I would, but going to a monthly basis, we’re talking in the \$10-million range, plus. It might make more sense to go quarterly or annually.”

Better labour market information about Aboriginal people, particularly on reserves, is “particularly important,” and should be a high priority, noted a 2009 federal labour market panel chaired by economist Don Drummond. It urged Statscan to develop a plan, backed by the federal government, to carry out the labour force survey on reserves.

Kelly Lendsay, president and CEO of the Aboriginal Human Resource Council, said more accurate, current and comparable labour market data on reserves would help plan skills training and educational priorities, and better calculate long-term employment projections. He would like to see this data produced at least every two years.

“Given the speed of change in labour markets, in skills training and technological change, there is a need for more and better information.”

A lack of data makes it more difficult to assess the effectiveness of government programs such as job retraining or skills development on reserves. It also means these communities aren’t included in regional unemployment numbers. Seemingly low regional jobless rates have allowed some employers to bring in temporary foreign workers despite operating in or near areas of high First Nations joblessness.

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/economy/budget-limits-create-logistical-challenge-for-first-nations-labour-data/article23397341/>

Aboriginal Politics

Nunavut MLA Isaac Shooyook walks out of Question Period

Member for Quttiktuq says he's tired of the same answers from government

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 06, 2015 6:39 AM CT Last Updated: Mar 06, 2015 6:39 AM CT

Quttiktuq MLA Isaac Shooyook walked out of Question Period at Nunavut's legislature yesterday to show his frustration with the government.

Shooyook, who represents the High Arctic communities of Arctic Bay, Resolute and Grise Fiord, has fought for more Inuit traditional values in government since being elected as an MLA in 2013.



Isaac Shooyook was elected MLA for Quttiktuq in 2013. He represents the High Arctic communities of Arctic Bay, Resolute and Grise Fiord. (Courtesy Isaac Shooyook)

For two days this week he questioned the government on that topic.

On Wednesday, after asking why Inuit societal values aren't being incorporated into public policy, he said in Inuktitut, "I have raised questions repeatedly and the rote answer is 'Let me look into that and I will respond with the information at a later time.' Well, I have not received any responses to date.

"What is the purpose of this language the bureaucrats continually spout? There is flowery language about incorporating traditional Inuit knowledge, yet many times the department refuses to implement this knowledge."

In Thursday's Question Period, Culture and Heritage Minister George Kuksuk told Shooyook he agrees that the law needs to be updated to reflect Nunavut.

Kuksuk also said implementing Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit is not easy, because all government departments have to figure out individual ways to use the traditional principles.

Shooyook said this in Inuktitut:

"I have this opportunity to tell the government today, or urge the government, to change the act. For the purpose of that, I will take an action today by leaving the chambers in front of all the members and the people watching."

Then he picked up all his binders and left.

Shooyook told CBC News he's tired of the same answers from the government.

His move took other MLAs by surprise, including Iqaluit-Niaqunnuq's Pat Angnakak, who sits next to Shooyook in the legislature.

"Maybe now the government will take notice because it is not a typical response," she said. "It's something that's quite out of the ordinary. And I think it just shows his level of frustration."

Kuksuk says he plans to speak with Shooyook about his concerns.

Shooyook says he'll be back in the legislature for Question Period today.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/nunavut-mla-isaac-shooyook-walks-out-of-question-period-1.2983878>

Federal government weighs in on Sask. First Nations' demands

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada responds to FSIN demands

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 07, 2015 11:09 AM CT Last Updated: Mar 07, 2015 5:23 PM CT



Minister Bernard Valcourt heads Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada. (CBC News)

The federal government has responded to demands made by the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations.

In an emailed statement to CBC, the federal ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada wrote,

"The health and safety of First Nation communities is a priority for our Government; that's why we are taking action and working with provinces and territories to implement a new comprehensive approach to emergency management in First Nation communities".

On Friday, the FSIN demanded the federal and provincial governments give it \$10 million to create and implement its own Technical Services Cooperative.

According to the federation, the cooperative would be run by its leaders and would be responsible for fire and emergency planning on reserves.

FSIN Interim Chief Kimberly Jonathan said Saskatchewan First Nations were told about discussions by federal and provincial officials relating to emergency services for First Nations communities, but were never included in the talks.

"[The] FSIN was recently informed that Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada and the government of Saskatchewan have negotiated a bilateral agreement for emergency management services on reserves without the participation of those affected," [Jonathan said](#).

In the emailed statement AANDC wrote that its work with provinces and territories on a new comprehensive approach to emergency management "will ensure that all residents on First Nation communities receive emergency services comparable to those that protect every other Canadian".

"Bilateral discussions are ongoing with provincial and territorial governments and we look forward to concluding these discussions," concluded the statement.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/federal-government-weighs-in-on-sask-first-nations-demands-1.2985777>

Inuit org election dispute starts with a spat over evidence

"I'm concerned as to the attempt now for documents not to be disclosed"

THOMAS ROHNER, March 10, 2015 - 11:15 am



Madeleine Redfern, a candidate for Iqaluit community director in the Qikiqtani Inuit Association's elections this past Dec. 8, in an undated file photo. In an application for judicial review of that election before the Nunavut Court of Justice, Redfern's lawyer, Teresa Haykowsky, is seeking about seven bankers' boxes of evidence. But QIA's lawyer, Sylvie Molgat, asserts that all of that evidence could be costly to produce in court and may not be relevant to the case. (FILE PHOTO)

Out of seven banker's boxes of documents relating to the Qikiqtani Inuit Association's elections last December, the QIA's lawyer has offered to hand over only a portion as potential evidence to Madeleine Redfern, who is asking the Nunavut Court of Justice to quash the results of an election she lost by one vote.

In other words, the judge in the case may be forced to rule on who needs to hand over what before the civil case can even proceed.

Redfern [filed an application for a judicial review](#) at the Iqaluit courthouse Jan. 7 after losing the Dec. 8 election for QIA's Iqaluit community director to incumbent Simon Nattaq.

The QIA failed in its duty to ensure procedural fairness in the election and in the legitimate expectations of candidates and voters, Redfern alleges in her application.

After Redfern filed her application, the Baffin Inuit organization sent their Ottawa-based lawyer Sylvie Molgat seven boxes of documents, including ballots, related to elections for the president as well as community director positions in eight Qikiqtani communities.

But when Redfern's lawyer requested access to those documents, the QIA's legal counsel objected.

"Our first objection to the complete production, as being requested, is that compliance... will be both time-consuming and very costly [to send back to Iqaluit]," Molgat told Justice Beverly Brown via teleconference in an Iqaluit courtroom March 9.

"More importantly, we submit that the records are of questionable relevance and materiality to the application."

Redfern is contesting the Iqaluit community director election, Molgat added, so boxes containing documents relating to elections for other positions, and to polling stations outside of Iqaluit, are not relevant.

But Teresa Haykowsky, Redfern's Edmonton-based lawyer, argued that her client's allegations relate to QIA's organization and communication — internally and to voters and candidates — leading up to the vote.

Her client is therefore entitled not only to documents related to the outcome of the Iqaluit community director election, Haykowsky said, but also to corresponding documents relating to the preparation of the vote in general.

The two lawyers sparred over whether documents relating to ballots cast in Ottawa for QIA's presidential election were relevant.

"Box one, two and three are boxes and boxes of ballots in the presidential vote," Molgat said. "I don't see anything in there that could be of possible relevance to a decision that the court is being asked to make in this case."

But Haykowsky said the QIA's communication about, and approach to, the presidential election is relevant in comparison to the community director's election — especially relating to proxy voting.

Proxy voting allows an eligible voter to delegate his or her vote to another eligible voter.

Eligible Qikiqtani voters in Ottawa were able to vote in-person for the QIA's presidential election, but were only able to vote by proxy for the community director elections.

An election notice issued by the QIA prior to the December election did not stipulate this.

"One of the reasons that we're looking at Ottawa is because it's not clear when an individual was voting... whether they were afforded the opportunity to properly cast their ballots, whether there was an appropriate structure in place," Haykowsky said.

"There was no facility to vote for community directors in Ottawa," Molgat replied, "so nothing from Ottawa... would be relevant to a challenge to the election of the community director in Iqaluit."

Boxes four, five and six contain ballots and documents relating to community director elections in all communities, Molgat said, but only portions of boxes five and six touch on Iqaluit's election for that position.

"We're proposing to produce... a portion of box five, a portion of box six and nothing of box seven," Molgat said. She did not disclose during court proceedings what the seventh box contained.

The usual practice at this point of civil litigation, Haykowsky said, is for the lawyers to negotiate an agreement about the release of documents.

“I’m concerned as to the attempt now for documents not to be disclosed when there should be disclosure touching on the matter,” Haykowsky said.

Molgat, in turn, characterized Haykowsky’s request for documents as a “fishing expedition.”.

Justice Brown played mediator.

“I’m here to solve problems that counsel cannot solve,” Brown said. “I would prefer counsel tried to sort it out.”

Brown scheduled another teleconference call with the two lawyers for March 13 at 11 a.m., but said she hoped the lawyers could come to an agreement before then.

“I will have a tentative booking for Friday morning and hope that you folks can settle it in the meantime,” she said.

The results of the QIA’s presidential vote is also in dispute. Mikidjuk Akavak, who lost the election in a recount to Pauloosie “PJ” Akeeagok, [filed his own judicial review](#) with the Nunavut court on Jan. 14.

Akavak, who is so far unrepresented in his court proceeding, alleges procedural problems with the recount and is also challenging the eligibility of two other candidates.

Akavak is scheduled to appear in court March 13.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674inuit_election_dispute_starts_with_a_spat_over_evidence/

Aboriginal leaders fear anti-terror bill gives licence to target them as ‘terrorists in our own territories’

[Canadian Press](#) | March 12, 2015 | Last Updated: Mar 12 3:39 PM ET



AFN National Chief Perry Bellegarde speaks at a news conference in Ottawa on Feb. 27 following the National Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

OTTAWA — Federal assurances the government’s anti-terrorism bill will not be a licence to spy on activists have done little to calm the fears of aboriginal leaders, environmentalists and human rights advocates.

This is not a government that has inspired confidence in its respect for the democratic institutions of this country.

The introduction of its new Anti-Terror legislation is a case in point – the whole process happened hundreds of miles from Parliament during Question Period; much of the media briefing took place without the legislation being made available to journalists.

Does it deserve to be given the benefit of the doubt when it introduces a dramatic extension of the surveillance powers of the state?

This is important stuff – the crucial balance between freedom and security. As Benjamin Franklin noted, a state that surrenders the former for the latter will not have, nor deserve, either one.

Several critics said Thursday they have strong reason to believe legislation would be used to step up surveillance of protesters opposed to petroleum projects and other resource developments.

“We don’t want to be labelled as terrorists in our own territories, our own homelands, for standing up to protect the land and waters,” Assembly of First Nations national chief Perry Bellegarde told the House of Commons public safety committee.

The committee plans to hear more than 50 witnesses on the bill, introduced in response to extremist-inspired attacks that killed two Canadian soldiers last October.

The legislation would give the Canadian Security Intelligence Service the ability to actively disrupt terror plots, make it easier for police to limit the movements of a suspect, expand no-fly list powers and take aim at terrorist propaganda.

In addition, the bill would relax the sharing of federally held information about activity that “undermines the security of Canada.”

Neither the new disruptive powers nor the information-sharing provisions apply to “lawful” advocacy, protest or dissent, but some fear the bill could be used against activists who demonstrate without an official permit or despite a court order.

Public Safety Minister Steven Blaney told the committee earlier this week such concerns were ridiculous, saying the legislation is not intended to capture minor violations committed during legitimate protests.

Roxanne James, Blaney’s parliamentary secretary, used much of her allotted time during the committee meeting not to ask questions of the witnesses, but to reiterate Blaney’s assurances.

There is strong reason to suspect the new powers could — and would — be used against those advocating for clean water, ecosystem protection and an end to climate change, said Joanna Kerr, executive director of Greenpeace Canada.

“We are very concerned that the draft legislation appears to environmental and First Nation climate activists as a threat to security,” she told the MPs.

Kerr pointed to the recent leak of an RCMP intelligence assessment, Criminal Threats to the Canadian Petroleum Industry, that said those within the movement are willing to go beyond peaceful actions and use “direct action tactics, such as civil disobedience, unlawful protests, break and entry, vandalism and sabotage.”

If an aim of the bill is to avoid targeting legitimate dissent, then parliamentarians “have an obligation to write the legislation so it cannot be used in that way,” she added.

Recent examples show the government already takes a very wide view as to what constitutes a threat to Canada’s security, said Carmen Cheung of the British Columbia Civil Liberties Association.

“We need only to look at CSIS and RCMP monitoring of non-violent protests undertaken by First Nations and environmental groups,” she told the MPs.

The bill’s information-sharing provisions are “fundamentally flawed” and should not be enacted, Cheung said.

She echoed concerns raised by privacy commissioner Daniel Therrien that the scope of the warrantless sharing would be excessive and put the personal information of Canadians at risk.

Direct Link: <http://news.nationalpost.com/2015/03/12/aboriginal-leaders-environmentalists-fear-anti-terror-bill-give-licence-to-target-them-as-terrorists-in-our-own-territories/>

Aboriginal Sports

Ski Fit North program brings Olympic dreams to First Nations schools

By [Jayme Doll](#) and [Erika Tucker](#) Global News, March 11, 2015 9:58 pm



CALGARY – Students from a First Nations community in northeastern Alberta are on a field trip this week, mingling with Olympians in Canmore, Alberta, and even taking some private lessons.

Fourteen-year-old Sophia Blyan says cross-country skiing changed her life when she started five years ago.

“I do it more often because I get stressed out a lot...School, work, problems at home,” said Blyan. “It makes me feel happy, secure...comfortable with myself.”

Blyan and dozens of others from Kikino School are gliding in the tracks of legends at the Canmore Nordic Centre.

Former Olympian Beckie Scott, the driver behind this Ski Fit North Alberta program, has been visiting First Nations schools over the past six years introducing her sport and promoting a healthy lifestyle. The program reaches out to 4,000 Metis and First Nations students each year in Alberta.

“We have seen it grow from kids who’ve never been on cross-country skis before, to competing at the Alberta Winter Games,” said Scott. “We’ve had some that are just telling us we’d made a real difference in our kids’ lives, saying they are more active.”

The program has been a huge success story in the far northeastern community of Kikino. They have a ski club, compete in races, and all 105 students have gear thanks to sponsors.

“It’s been an absolutely amazing ride to see the benefits of physical literacy and mental health for our students,” said principal Laurie Thompson.

Blyan raced last year at the Alberta Winter Games, and dreams of bigger competitions in the future.

“I just hope I can go to the Olympics one day,” she said.

Direct Link: <http://globalnews.ca/news/1877952/ski-fit-north-program-brings-olympic-dreams-to-first-nations-schools/>

Energy, the Environment & Natural Resources

Yukon government recommends focus on horizontal fracking

Documents from Energy, Mines and Resources recommend working on 'regulatory readiness'

By Nancy Thomson, [CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 06, 2015 7:44 PM CT Last Updated: Mar 08, 2015 1:56 PM CT



Na-Cho Nyak Dun elder Frank Patterson speaking at a consultation session on hydraulic fracturing. (Philippe Morin/CBC)

The CBC has received internal government documents revealing the Yukon government's draft strategy for hydraulic fracturing in the territory.

The documents include a PowerPoint presentation by the acting assistant deputy minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and a note explaining that the presentation will be given to the government caucus in coming weeks.

The other document is a draft speech, prepared for Energy Mines and Resources minister Scott Kent.

'Focus on multi-stage horizontal fracking.'

The PowerPoint begins by noting that the [report by the Yukon legislative select committee](#) on hydraulic fracturing "does not recommend a ban or moratorium on fracking."

It goes on to say "...it is recommended that YG focus on multi-stage horizontal fracking" and the Eagle Plain and Liard oil and gas basins.



A majority of Yukoners who appeared before the select committee on hydraulic fracturing were opposed to the practice. (Nancy Thomson/CBC)

The presentation notes there are currently no proposals for shale gas development in Yukon. It talks about activities the department will do immediately, including launching a public information campaign, conducting an economic study, and establishing baseline data on water, wildlife, and seismic activities.

The document says the government's interdepartmental working group will "work on moving forward with parallel initiatives on: regulatory readiness, economic analysis ... and the appointment of an external review panel."

The documents says regulatory readiness will enhance data collection in the Eagle Plain and Liard basins. It says such baseline data will be "useful to support any industry."

'Explore potential partnerships with affected First Nations'

The PowerPoint also includes a page dedicated to a "First Nation engagement strategy."

That includes hearing First Nations concerns about hydraulic fracturing and continuing to work "government to government with First Nations" to determine what support is needed if oil and gas projects occur within their traditional territories.

The presentation says part of the information and engagement strategy will "stimulate new industry investment" in the territory's oil and gas sector.

The document notes fracking is so controversial that "most people cannot evaluate the merits of the conflicting information."

It recommends setting up an independent expert panel, stating "The goal is to build public trust."

It goes on to point out that more information won't give a "definitive answer" on whether fracking can be done safely, adding that a risk management decision "will always be ... required."

The draft speech prepared for Kent contains much of the same information but it doesn't address the recommendation that the Yukon government focus on horizontal fracturing.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/yukon-government-recommends-focus-on-horizontal-fracking-1.2985467>

First Nations water problems won't be solved by charity, expert says

Government policy at the root of long-standing drinking water problems, lawyer Julie Abouchar says

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 09, 2015 6:00 AM ET Last Updated: Mar 09, 2015 3:15 PM ET



'Small and Aboriginal Communities: Solutions that fit' is one of themes of a Canadian Water Network conference taking place in Toronto, beginning March 10. (sl_photo/Shutterstock)

Governments, not charities, need to provide long-term solutions to the problem of unsafe drinking water in First Nations, says lawyer Julie Abouchar.

Abouchar, who served as assistant commission counsel at the Walkerton Inquiry, is one of the speakers tackling the issue of unsafe water in First Nations at the Canadian Water Network's conference beginning Tuesday in Ottawa.

Charitable donations recently helped fund running water systems for 20 homes in Pikangikum First Nation, a fly-in First Nation in northwestern Ontario. A non-profit group has approached Neskantaga First Nation, also in Ontario's remote north, to offer water aid there.



Lawyer Julie Abouchar says government policy changes are needed to resolve problems with safe drinking water in First Nations communities. (Canadian Water Network)

"Any effort made to improve the situation is positive," Abouchar said of the charitable work. "I worry that those solutions may not be long-term solutions."

The first step toward those long-term solutions is a conversation between policy makers in Ottawa and individual First Nations about what would work best in their communities.

Nearly half of the 133 First Nations in Ontario currently have boil water advisories, and it has been more than ten years since ten First Nations in northwestern Ontario had safe drinking water.

In 2013, the Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act provided a legislative framework to ensure drinking water on reserves met the same standards as those in the rest of Canada, but there are still no regulations under the act, Abouchar said.

"I think it's time to take a pause and hear what First Nations want," she said.

The desire by charitable groups to solve basic human rights issues is understandable, Abouchar said, "but without changing the underlying policies and approaches, you probably shouldn't expect a different outcome."

Clarifications

- A previous version of this story stated the conference will be held in Toronto. It will be held in Ottawa.

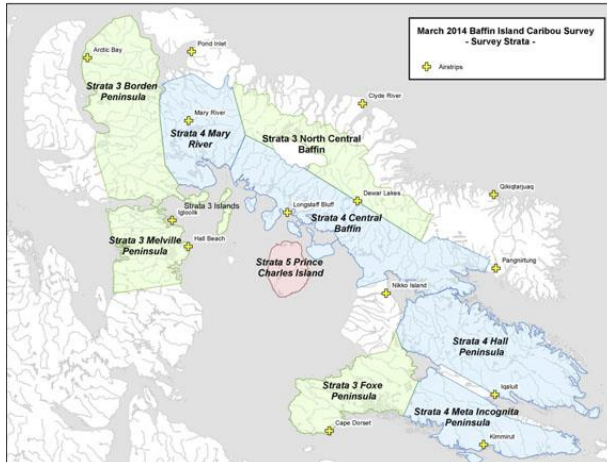
Mar 09, 2015 9:07 AM ET

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/first-nations-water-problems-won-t-be-solved-by-charity-expert-says-1.2983000>

Nunavut groups suggest modest quotas replace Baffin caribou ban

Wildlife board to consider future of herd at public hearings March 11, March 12

NUNATSIAQ NEWS



This map shows the caribou population areas that Government of Nunavut wildlife officials surveyed by air in 2014. (IMAGE COURTESY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF NUNAVUT)

As the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board prepares for public hearings this week on whether to allow hunting of the diminishing Baffin caribou herds, some groups are calling for an immediate lifting of the ban and a limited harvest.

The Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board is requesting the Jan. 1, 2015, ban be quashed and a quota of 60 bull caribou be established with animals distributed equally to Baffin hunters and trappers organizations through the QWB.

“Inuit are of the opinion that although the numbers are low, this will not result in the depletion of the Baffin Island caribou population,” says the QWB submission to the NWMB, dated Feb. 13, 2015.

They say the Baffin caribou hunting moratorium, now more than two months old, was done swiftly and in “relative secrecy,” and they argue that, “in considering the importance and value of caribou, a hunt, no matter how limited, is necessary for Baffin Island communities.”

For its part, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. supports the limited harvest of 60 bulls annually and says the quota should be in place, “no later than 1 June 2015.”

The land claim organization also supports other possible measures to reduce the impact on the dwindling Baffin Island herd, including banning hunting for non-Inuit but allowing a three-week open season for Inuit, in August perhaps, for bull caribou only.

“Specific reporting conditions could be attached to such an Inuit harvest, and specific sensitive areas closed to harvesting,” NTI’s submission said.

The GN’s environment department is also making a recommendation to the NWMB: between 47 and 140 bull caribou, which means a harvest of one to three per cent of the remaining herd.

“Note that each cow harvested in the population is equivalent to approximately three bulls; therefore a mixed harvest would need to be proportionately lower,” says the GN’s February 2015 submission.

The GN document summarizes [the bad news](#) that everyone’s heard already: recent aerial surveys have shown that there are between 3,400 and 6,200 caribou left on the island, down from an estimated 100,000 in 1985.

North Baffin is particularly barren, government wildlife officials say, with only a few hundred caribou left.

Inuit knowledge and contemporary research both agree that the Baffin herds have gone through natural boom and bust population cycles over the years.

“Although the current decline is not being blamed on hunters, we believe over-harvesting when there are so few animals may lead to further decline and possibly even extirpation of this population,” the GN’s submission said.

Extirpation means they would no longer exist locally.

But if other NWMB submissions from various parties are any indication, the public hearings, scheduled to take place this week in Iqaluit, will be lively.

The Pangnirtung Hunters and Trappers Organization held a public consultation on Jan. 22 and more than 40 people showed up. Their submission includes comments gathered at that meeting.

Most Pangnirtung hunters said they were shocked by the ban. One said if he saw a caribou, he would hunt it anyway and thus break the law.

Others said it’s important to support the ban, for a year perhaps, to preserve the herd for future generations.

One hunter pointed to the actions of late-elder Noah Piugatuk of Igloolik who, along with fellow hunters, harvested a bowhead whale in contravention of a ban in place at the time.

“When it was caught, they distributed the meat to the community. They got charged and fined for doing the hunt. But they also got praised for practicing the old ways,” the Pangnirtung hunter is quoted as saying. “Even if we get charged, we should just continue to practice our tradition.”

Many blamed wolves for the decline and one hunter even suggested the GN should establish a bounty so hunters can harvest Baffin wolves.

And just to show the power and reach of social media these days, one hunter even suggested the Pangnirtung HTO set up a Facebook page to keep everyone informed.

Several other hunters and trappers organizations made submissions to the NWMB as well.

The Mittimatalik Hunters and Trappers in Pond Inlet suggested a quota of five caribou per person for a year, or 50 to 90 per community.

Kimmirut hunters and trappers support a quota but don't offer a number. They also "urge the Government of Nunavut to see if reindeer caribou can be transported to Baffin Island."

The public hearings will take place March 11 and March 12 at the Anglican Parish hall in Iqaluit from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily.

If necessary, the NWMB may hold evening meetings from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674nunavut_groups_suggest_modest_quotas_replace_baffin_caribou_ban/

Gogama train derailment highlights treaty infringement, chief says

First Nations 'tired of being pawns in Canada's addiction to oil,' regional chief Stan Beardy says

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 11, 2015 7:00 AM ET Last Updated: Mar 11, 2015 11:03 AM ET



The submerged rail cars seen in this photo have now been retrieved from the river after the March 7 derailment of this CN train near Gogama, Ont. (Transportation Safety Board)

The third train derailment in less than a month in northern Ontario represents a clear violation of indigenous rights, says Stan Beardy, the Ontario regional chief for the Assembly of First Nations.

An investigation is underway at the site of the most recent derailment on Saturday near Gogama, Ont. but it's still not clear how much oil was spilled when two rail cars landed in the Mattagami River system.

Nearby Mattagami First Nation is hiring its own environmental specialist to look into the impact of the derailment on air and water quality.

"When we talk about the transporting of dangerous goods, like crude oil, through First Nations territories there has to be safeguards to make sure that the way of life of First Nations people is protected and intact as much as possible," Beardy said.

"We are tired of being pawns in Canada's addiction to oil," he said.



Ontario regional chief Stan Beardy says there are currently no provisions for First Nations to be notified about dangerous goods being transported on their traditional territories. (Nishnawbe Aski Nation)

The right to practice traditional lifestyles such as hunting, fishing and trapping are enshrined in the Canadian Constitution, Beardy said, "but you need healthy animals, healthy birds, healthy fish. If they're contaminated then someone is violating that constitutional right."

Chiefs from across Ontario will gather on Thursday to decide how best to address their concerns with railways and pipelines.

Beardy said he'd like to see a legal strategy focusing on the duty of railways and pipelines to consult and accommodate First Nations.

There are currently no provisions for First Nations even to be notified about dangerous materials being transported across traditional territories, he said.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/gogama-train-derailment-highlights-treaty-infringement-chief-says-1.2989674>

Wataynikaneyap First Nations-led power company moves ahead

Sandy Lake, Wabigoon First Nations join initiative to extend power transmission line in remote north

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 12, 2015 3:53 PM ET Last Updated: Mar 12, 2015 4:23 PM ET



Margaret Kenequanash, chair of Wataynikayap Power says First Nations will ensure responsible development in their homelands while maximizing benefits to the communities. (Jody Porter/CBC)

A First Nations-led transmission company that aims to connect remote communities in northern Ontario to the provincial hydro grid gained two new partners on Thursday.

Sandy Lake First Nation and Wabigoon First Nation signed on with Wataynikaneyap Power at a board meeting for the company in Thunder Bay, bringing the number of ownership communities to 20.

All of the First Nations involved currently rely on diesel generators for electricity in their communities. The \$1-billion project would see the transmission line extending north of Pickle Lake, and Red Lake, Ont. to connect the First Nations.

"For us it's clean energy," said Sandy Lake Chief Bart Meekis. "We want to get off diesel fuel energy that I think is really contaminating our lands."

A more reliable power supply will also open up new opportunities for more housing and businesses in Sandy Lake, Meekis said.



Sandy Lake Chief Bart Meekis says being connected to the power grid will bring new opportunities to his community. (Jody Porter/CBC)

"The term that we always hear is that we live off the land," Meekis said. "It doesn't just mean fish and animals, it means that the land is looking after us as a people and part of it is to be able to benefit and prosper as a people in our lands."

In the development phase Wataynikaneyap Power is a partnership among the 20 First Nations, AECOM, PowerTel, Goldcorp and Deutsche Bank, but the aim is for the transmission line to be wholly owned by First Nations.

"To have 20 First Nations to agree to work together on a major initiative is unprecedented," said Wataynikaneyap Power chair Margaret Kenequanash.

"I truly believe in my people that we were put on this land to be part of the economy," she said. "We have a treaty with governments so as part of our exercise of those rights that we have then we will move forward with changing the landscape of Canada."

Connecting First Nations to the grid is expected to save \$1 billion in energy costs over 40 years, Kenequanash said.

Ontario recently approved the terms of reference for the environmental assessment of the first phase of the project to begin. Kenequanash said that clears the way for formal community consultations with the First Nations.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/wataynikaneyap-first-nations-led-power-company-moves-ahead-1.2992569>

Land Claims & Treaty Rights

Haida Nation win injunction against commercial fishery on Haida Gwaii

By [Justin McElroy](#) Web Producer Global News, March 7, 2015 1:10 am



A federal court has ruled that the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans cannot open a fishery in Haida Gwaii this year.

An injunction was given to the Haida Nation, against the federal government, to prevent the re-opening of a commercial herring fishery on the nation's north coast.

"This win is another step to building herring stocks, and in doing so, contributes to an economy that will provide a reasonable living for our people, and the path of reconciliation with Canada," said Haida Nation President Peter Lantin in a statement.

In a November 2014 memo, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans recommended that the herring fishery be opened in all five major areas of the Pacific Region, because stocks were "projected to be above the commercial cut-off level for the 2015 season."

The Haida argued that herring stocks had not rebuilt enough to support the opening, and that the department's management process was flawed.

In his ruling, Justice Michael Mason said "there is a real and serious risk of irreparable harm if the Haida Gwaii area is reopened for roe herring fishery in 2015."

He also said the federal government failed to meaningfully consult with the Haida Nation in their plans.

"There is a heightened duty for DFO and the Minister to accommodate the Haida Nation is negotiating and determining the roe herring fishery in Haida Gwaii, given the existing Gwaii Haanas Agreement, the unique Haida Gwaii marine conservation area, the ecological concerns, and the duty to foster reconciliation with and protection of the constitutional rights of the Haida Nation."

"While these factors do not give the Haida any veto over what can be done in Haida Gwaii with respect to roe herring fishery, or fetter Canada's rights, and must be balanced with commercial rights and public interest, in looking deeply at the facts involved here, I

find that the failure to consult meaningfully with the Haida Nation by Canada, and instead unilaterally imposing a highly questionable opening of the roe herring fishery in Haida Gwaii for 2015, also constitutes irreparable harm.”

A year ago, the Haida joined two other First Nations to oppose a plan to open a commercial herring fishery that had been closed on Vancouver Island since 2006.

Last March, a Federal Court judge granted an injunction stopping the opening, saying the fisheries minister went against the advice of scientists in her own department.

Justice Mason also ruled that a commercial herring fishery cannot be opened until the hearing of a judicial review application, the completion of a herring management framework, and the completion of an integrated Gwaii Haanas Management Plan.

Direct Link: <http://globalnews.ca/news/1869522/haida-nation-win-injunction-against-commercial-fishery-on-haida-gwaii/>

First Nations fight herring fisheries off British Columbia coast

Laura Kane / The Canadian Press
March 7, 2015 01:07 PM



Haida Nation says it has won an injunction to block a planned herring roe fishery on its territory.
Photograph By Vancouver Sun

HAIDA GWAI, B.C. - First Nations in British Columbia are fighting the reopening of commercial herring fisheries on their territories, arguing that stocks remain perilously low.

The Haida Nation in the remote community of Haida Gwaii recently won an injunction to block a planned fishery, while the Tseshaht Nation on west Vancouver Island is set to protest the opening of a fishery on Sunday.

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Saturday.

A Federal Court judge released a decision this week that found there was a risk of "irreparable harm" if a large commercial herring roe fishery was allowed to re-open in Haida Gwaii this year.

Justice Michael Manson acknowledged the Department of Fisheries and Oceans has a "heightened duty" to accommodate the Haida, given their constitutional rights and environmental concerns.

He also wrote the government failed to meaningfully consult with the Haida in its plans.

Nation president Peter Lantin said in a statement he hopes the government will start working with the Haida to develop sustainable fisheries.

"This win is another step to building herring stocks, and in doing so, contributes to an economy that will provide a reasonable living for our people, and the path of reconciliation with Canada," he said.

A year ago, the Haida joined two other First Nations to oppose a plan to open a commercial herring fishery that had been closed on Vancouver Island since 2006.

Last March, a Federal Court judge granted an injunction stopping the opening, saying the fisheries minister went against the advice of scientists in her own department.

The Tseshaht Nation in Port Alberni, B.C., said it has learned a commercial herring fishery will re-open Sunday in the Barkley Sound area on the west coast of Vancouver Island.

Chief Councillor Hugh Braker said he and other nation members will go out in their boats early Sunday morning to protest the fishery.

"Our intention is to firstly exercise our right to harvest the roe, and secondly to do everything we can to stop the commercial fishery," he said.

Braker said herring are a "prized fish" for his nation.

"We haven't been able to access the herring roe now for many years because the herring were almost wiped out by the government in the '70s and '80s," he said.

"Now they're just rebuilding, so we want them to rebuild some more before we open the fishery. The government has not listened to us."

- See more at: <http://www.timescolonist.com/first-nations-fight-herring-fisheries-off-british-columbia-coast-1.1785354#sthash.2NBDjOzq.dpuf>

Court challenges launched against Site C dam

By

[Brent Patterson](#)

| March 9, 2015



The Council of Canadians has been opposing the Site C dam since March.

Site C is a proposed 60-metre high, 1,050-metre-long earth-filled dam and hydroelectric generation station that would be located on the Peace River between the communities of Hudson's Hope and Taylor in northeastern British Columbia. It would create an 83-kilometre-long reservoir and flood about 5,550 hectares of agricultural land southwest of Fort St. John. It would submerge 78 First Nations heritage sites, including burial grounds and places of cultural and spiritual significance.

A spokesperson for BC Hydro [admits](#) the power from the dam is necessary given expectations for major growth in the liquefied natural gas, mining and forestry sectors in the province as well as population growth. Much of the power will go to environmentally destructive projects like fracking in British Columbia, which in turn is used to fuel the extraction of bitumen from the tar sands. It has been estimated that Site C would emit 150,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions a year, the equivalent of adding 27,000 cars on the road.

After the British Columbia government approved the controversial dam in December 2014, Council of Canadians chairperson Maude Barlow stated, "We are deeply disappointed by the B.C. government's short-sighted decision. We stand in solidarity with Treaty 8 First Nations whose treaty rights will be violated with this project. But this affects everyone in the region -- farmers, residents, and scientists alike."

Earlier last week, the Blueberry River First Nations, a Treaty 8 First Nation, launched a legal challenge against Site C to be heard in the B.C. Supreme Court. [CBC reports](#), "The area the band claims as its traditional territory is located in northeastern B.C. and includes

the city of Fort St. John and the location of the proposed Site C dam. ...[Chief Marvin Yahey of the Blueberry River First Nations wants] the Site C dam and other projects slowed to provide time for consultation, which he called 'disappointing' to date."

The Peace Valley Landowner Association (PVLA) is also challenging Site C in court. They contend that, "The only independent review of the Project to date, by the federal/provincial Joint Review Panel, concluded that fundamental questions of cost, need and alternatives to the Project are not settled, and require further independent and public review by the BC Utilities Commission, before the Project is built."

Their media release notes, "The PVLA case will be heard by the BC Supreme Court starting April 20, 2015, and by the Federal Court of Canada during the week of July 20, 2015. First Nations' legal challenges to the approvals will be heard consecutively with the PVLA cases. All cases will be heard in Vancouver."

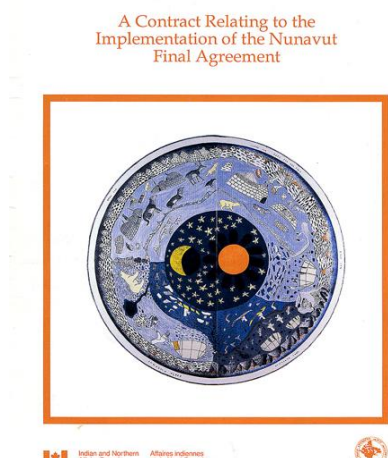
Construction of Site C could begin this summer with a completion date of 2024.

Direct Link: <http://rabble.ca/blogs/bloggers/brent-patterson/2015/03/court-challenges-launched-against-site-c-dam>

We've struck a deal with Canada to end lawsuit, Nunavut land claim org says

Tentative implementation settlement awaits approval from NTI, GN, Canada

NUNATSIAQ NEWS, March 09, 2015 - 4:04 pm



NTI's lawsuit against Ottawa: so what's all the fuss about? A lot of it is about this, the implementation contract for the NLCA that expired in 2003 and was never renewed after negotiators reached an impasse.

(Updated 5:10 p.m., March 9)

Negotiators representing Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. and Canada have reached what they describe as a “tentative agreement” that would settle a massive lawsuit that NTI filed in December 2006, NTI said March 9 in a news release.

“Details of the settlement will be disclosed once the agreement has been considered and approved by NTI, the Government of Canada and the Government of Nunavut,” NTI said.

The lawsuit, which alleged Ottawa committed numerous breaches of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement and sought about \$1 billion in compensation, was to have gone to trial March 9 at the Nunavut Court of Justice in Iqaluit.

That process, however, has been adjourned, likely until around April 20, a source familiar with the case told *Nunatsiaq News* last week.

And at a mid-afternoon court appearance in Iqaluit March 9, Dougald Brown, a lawyer representing NTI, said all sides have agreed to adjourn until after the out-of-court settlement is approved.

“In the circumstances, I believe all counsel are agreed that the trial should be adjourned... pending approval and signing by the parties,” Brown said during a teleconference call among lawyers and Justice Earl Johnson, the judge who would have presided over the trial.

“The approval process on the government side could take a few weeks, and in order to keep the court aware of the status of the case, I would suggest the court set a teleconference date in the third week of April... we may not need it. We can complete the settlement before then, but if not, we have something scheduled to keep you apprised of where we’re at,” Brown said.

Brown also said that after the parties approve the negotiated settlement, NTI would go back to court to file documentation that would terminate proceedings.

The lawsuit has its roots in a dispute that dates back to the early years of the last decade, when [negotiators for Canada and NTI failed to reach agreement on a new implementation contract for the NLCA.](#)

The last implementation contract expired in 2003 and was never renewed, due to intractable disputes over the implementation of Article 23 and other sections of the land claims agreement.

Most of those disputes began when the Liberal governments held power in Ottawa, under former prime ministers Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin.

In those failed talks, NTI demanded more money from Ottawa to pay for the training and education of Inuit under Article 23, the section of the NLCA that requires that governments operating in the Nunavut settlement area provide affirmative action programs for Inuit job seekers until the proportion of Inuit in the public service equals their proportion of the population.

In May 2005, Paul Martin's Liberal government [appointed the renowned jurist and aboriginal rights expert, Thomas Berger](#), to act as a conciliator.

Parts of Berger's interim report recommendations on [funding for institutions of public government](#) appear to have been carried out.

[But Berger's final report](#), which focused almost exclusively on Article 23, failed to break the impasse.

The GN was added to the case as a third party in 2009.

With files from Thomas Rohner

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674weve_struck_a_deal_with_canada_to_end_lawsuit_nunavut_land_claim_org_s/

Aboriginal Affairs using 'false' statements to trumpet specific claims successes: report

[National News](#) | March 10, 2015 by [Jorge Barrera](#) | [2 Comments](#)



Jorge Barrera***APTN National News***

The federal Aboriginal Affairs department has used “misleading” and “false” statements to claim success in dealing with historical grievances known as specific claims, a new report has found.

The report, *In Bad Faith: Justice at Last and Canada’s Failure to Resolve Specific Land Claims*, was released this week along with an open letter addressed to Prime Minister Stephen Harper signed by over 100 First Nation chiefs, tribal council heads, research directors, NDP leader Thomas Mulcair, NDP MPs and non-government organizations.

The report takes aim at the federal government’s “Justice At Last” policy to deal with specific claims and finds it has been a failure. The report said Aboriginal Affairs plans to “terminate” its program funding for Justice at Last based on “false statements” that the department has met its objectives on specific claims.

“The failure of Justice at Last reflects a deep and growing rift between First Nations and the Crown, one that is characterized by a profound mistrust towards government processes, systems, promises, and, most importantly honour,” said the report, which was composed by research directors working with First Nations across the country.

The issue surfaced in the House of Commons during question period Tuesday. [NDP Aboriginal affairs critics Niki Ashton pressed Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt](#) to act on the report’s recommendations.

“Will the minister of Aboriginal Affairs listen to the recommendations and answer for his department’s failure?” said Ashton.

Valcourt said the department had no plans to change its ways. The minister said the department had settled 120 specific claims and cleared a backlog of about 516 claims.

“Our government is committed to delivering fair and timely resolution for First Nation specific claims,” said Valcourt. “Our government has made unprecedented progress on this topic and we will continue in that way.”

Valcourt’s office was first asked by *APTN National News* about the report Monday, but failed to respond. Late Tuesday afternoon, a spokesperson sent an email containing the minister’s comment from question period, but ignored *APTN’s* question regarding the report.

The report analyzed Aboriginal Affairs’ “five achievements” under the policy, which was first announced in 2007. The federal department states fewer claims are entering the system, the backlog has been eliminated, mediation is working, specific claims accepted by the minister are being negotiated and the Specific Claims Tribunal is meeting its legislative requirements.

“An analysis of (Aboriginal Affairs) data and input from First Nations currently involved in the specific claims process shows that contrary to (Aboriginal Affairs) reports and public announcements, the five achievements outlined above have not been attained,” said the report.

Specific claims stem from historical grievances from First Nations around the mismanagement of trust funds by Ottawa and the loss of lands. The Oka and Ipperwash conflicts both stemmed from specific historical grievances over the loss of land.

The report said the number of claims entering the system is actually increasing because the federal department is forcing First Nations to pull back and break up their claims into smaller pieces. The department’s specific claims branch is only accepting to negotiate minor portions of claims and then “demanding legal releases of liability on the bulk of substantive allegations,” said the report.

The report also blasts the department’s assertion that it had cleared a backlog of 572 specific claim files. The report said the department cleared the backlog using “take-it-or-leave-it” offers which allowed officials to reject or close 85 per cent of the files in the backlog.

The report found that the department rejected less claims, 44 per cent, before the Justice At Last policy took hold.

“Contrary to (Aboriginal Affairs) statements and reports, the backlog has not been eliminated. It persists in the form of unresolved claims,” said the report. “The backlog has been repackaged and effectively transferred to the Specific Claims Tribunal or returned to the pre-submission stage.”

The Specific Claims Tribunal (SCT) was also announced in 2007 as part of the Justice At Last package. First Nations can go to the tribunal once their negotiations hit a dead-end or are rejected by Aboriginal Affairs.

The Chair of the tribunal, Justice Harry Slade, [has warned it is on the edge of failure unless the Harper government appoints](#) another full-time judge to deal with the rising workload. [Slade has also warned that recent centralizing changes to federal tribunal administration threatens the independence of the SCT.](#)

The report said the federal government is undermining the tribunal.

“(The SCT) is seeing its independence, authority and legitimacy undermined and resources curtailed by the government who currently lauds it as one of its successes,” said the report.

Aboriginal Affairs’ mediation services, which are housed within the department and staffed by department officials, also faced criticism in the report. The report said the

department ignored a public commitment to work with First Nations on the mediation unit.

“First Nations have publicly criticized this mediation unit for its appearance of conflict of interest,” said the report. “First Nations’ requests for mediation services are routinely denied by specific claims branch officials. With the prevalence of ‘take-it-or-leave-it’ offers, there is much less opportunity for mediation.”

Prime Minister Stephen Harper was on hand to unveil the Justice at Last policy and accompanying tribunal on June 12, 2007. At the time Harper said it represented a “historic breakthrough.”

The announcement was made partly to quell rising tensions in the lead-up to a planned day of action scheduled for that month. Only Shawn Brant and the Mohawks of Tyendinaga launched blockades that day, shutting down Hwy 401, the busiest highway in Canada, for 11 hours.

The report was emailed to Harper’s office which will also receive a paper copy in the mail.

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/03/10/aboriginal-affairs-using-false-statements-trumpet-specific-claim-successes-report/>

Dehcho First Nations, N.W.T. gov't at impasse over land claim

Dehcho Grand Chief accuses government of offering an ultimatum without doing any negotiating

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 09, 2015 7:54 AM CT Last Updated: Mar 09, 2015 5:57 PM CT



Dehcho Grand Chief Herb Norwegian says the N.W.T. government is asking them to accept a land claim settlement or accept that 'negotiations have failed,' but Norwegian also says there were no negotiations at all. (CBC)

The grand chief of the Dehcho First Nations says the Government of the Northwest Territories is asking them to accept a land claim settlement, even though the government hasn't actually negotiated anything with them.

The Dehcho, whose traditional territory is centred in the southwest of the N.W.T., are asking for control of about 50,000 square kilometres of land in their land claim negotiations, including both surface and subsurface rights.

In a letter to the First Nation, the territorial government, which has taken over negotiations with the Dehcho from the federal government since devolution in 2013, offers 37,000 square kilometres, with only surface rights, as well as royalties of about 18 per cent on the land.

The territorial government says that's as flexible as it can be, and if that offer isn't good enough, then both parties should "acknowledge that negotiations have failed."

However, Dehcho Grand Chief Herb Norwegian, calling the territorial government's offer an "ultimatum," says there were no negotiations at all.

"What they need to understand," says Norwegian, "is that if they are going to get any certainty down the Mackenzie they are going to have to go through the Dehcho, whether they like it or not."

Norwegian, who is calling for a mediator to help repair the relationship between the two parties, says there is no other solution but to work through the dissension and come to an agreement.

"It becomes a pretty dicey issue for the territorial government if they think they're gonna walk away and leave the Dehcho hanging," he says. "Because that's not the way that we operate."

On Monday in the legislative assembly, Premier Bob McLeod said the territory is simply being honest with the Dehcho First Nations about how flexible it can be.

"The government will continue to work in good faith with the communities in the Dehcho Process," he says.

"However this can only be made with frank and honest conversations. This means we must be able to lay out the extent of what we can do while still be fair to everyone. This is simply being honest and respectful. It is not being a bully or acting in a threatening manner."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/dehcho-first-nations-n-w-t-gov-t-at-impasse-over-land-claim-1.2986937>

Algonquins of Ontario claim facing internal tensions, accusations some involved not Indigenous

[National News](#) | March 11, 2015 by [Jorge Barrera](#) | [0 Comments](#)



Jorge Barrera

APTN National News

Cracks are starting to show within the massive Algonquins of Ontario land claim as the chief of the only federally-recognized First Nation involved in the negotiations is beginning to question the authenticity of some who are claiming Algonquin ancestry to be part of the deal.

Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation Chief Kirby Whiteduck said some in his community are starting to question the legitimacy of a number of people who have signed up claiming to be Algonquin.

“We are getting feedback that some members (of Pikwakanagan) knew some of these people all their lives and never once said they were Algonquins,” said Whiteduck. “Some of them now who said they were never Algonquin are now Algonquin chiefs. So the members don’t really appreciate that.”

Pikwakanagan is one of 10 Algonquin communities recognized by Ottawa and Queen’s Park as part of the Algonquins of Ontario land claim. Pikwakanagan is the only community recognized by the federal Aboriginal Affairs department as a legitimate First Nation band. The First Nation sits about 147 kilometres west of Ottawa.

The claim covers about 9 million acres including the Ottawa region and an area stretching from North Bay to Kingston, Ont.

Pikwakanagan has about 1,800 members of voting-age on their band roll, said Whiteduck.

About 7,000 people are enrolled in the Ontario Algonquin claim, said Robert Potts who is the senior negotiator for the Algonquin claim.

Whiteduck said concern in his community over the influx of new Algonquins could pose a threat to a deal unless the issue is sorted out.

“If members don’t like it, they are most likely to vote no on the (agreement in principle),” said Whiteduck. “They question, all of a sudden, who are these people? Where do they come from?”

Whiteduck has also been on the receiving end of barbed criticism from a chief of one of these new Algonquin communities called the Antoine Algonquin.

Antoine Algonquin Chief Davie Joannise has accused the leadership of Pikwakanagan of being “traitors to their people” for supporting a windfarm project.

“Yes I did say that,” said Joannise. “All of a sudden here they are without telling anyone at the table, partnering up with a company to come up in our backyard, where we do hunting and fishing...and they’ve partnered up to put windfarms there.”

Joannise said he wasn’t sure if the windfarm issue would upend the overall Algonquin claim, but the land in question for development was selected by his community because it has cultural significance.

“We are in negotiations here, things get heated, it is no different than Parliament where things get heated,” he said. “Pikwakanagan has realized they made a mistake here by doing this. We should be able to rectify this, I am hoping. It will be a hard pill to swallow if we can’t.”

Innergex Renewable Energy has partnered with Pikwakanagan to build a 150 Megawatt windfarm on Crown land in the Mattawan Township.

Eagle Village Chief Madeleine Paul, whose federally-recognized Algonquin First Nation is based out of Quebec, claims the area slated for the windfarm as part of her community’s traditional territory. Paul has opened channels with Pikwakanagan and Quebec firm Innergex to discuss the project.

Paul, however, said the Antoine Algonquins do not have a say on the issue.

“How can they say it’s their traditional land when they are not even First Nations? They don’t have a right to say that,” said Paul.

Paul said the nine non-status Algonquin communities are a “policy fiction” propped up by Queen’s Park and Ottawa to help extinguish Aboriginal title to places like Parliament Hill.

“These people are not First Nation people...they are calling themselves chiefs and they have these rights, but they are not true First Nation people like every one of my members,” said Paul. “They are setting a precedent that we will have to deal with on the Quebec side to redefine what an Algonquin is and that is the threat.”

Wolf Lake First Nation Chief Harry St. Denis also weighed in on the emerging controversy saying he knows Joannise who previously admitted he “didn’t have any Indian blood in him at all.” The Algonquin chief, who is also based on the Quebec side, said he had the conversation with Joannise in 1997.

“Low and behold, 10 years later he is calling himself a chief,” said St. Denis. “For sure most of them are not real Algonquins. They are there for any of the benefits, and you can’t blame them, because now they have nothing, but soon they’ll have fishing rights, maybe they’ll be able to hunt in Algonquin Park, hunt out of season, but they’re not real Algonquin, that’s for sure.”

Joannise, however, insists he is “of Algonquin descent” and that St. Denis and Paul are thinking with “an old mentality.” Joannise said he is recognized by the Constitution and doesn’t need the Indian Act to give him legitimacy.

“My family has been here forever. As far as I can trace back, it’s Algonquin. There’s nothing else,” he said. “I lived an Algonquin lifestyle all my life. We lived off the land, we fished, we lived with other Aboriginals in Mattawa...Everybody here knew who the Algonquins were.”

Senior negotiator Potts said everyone who has been accepted as part of the Algonquin claim underwent a rigorous process to establish their Algonquin ancestry. He said about 1,000 applications had been rejected.

Potts said St. Denis “comes from a status perspective” that fails to include the real history of the region.

“It is a hard transition for people that have that to suddenly recognize that there are other Aboriginal people that are involved,” he said. “Some of the communities that are involved have status people in them.”

Potts said there should have been “five or six” Algonquin reserves in Ontario, but, following the Royal Proclamation of 1763, successive governors ignored petitions from the resident Algonquins and never engaged in treaty talks.

“That is the tragedy of this things,” said Potts. “A number of governors let it slide through the cracks and these people were never properly addressed.”

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/03/11/algonquins-ontario-claim-facing-internal-tensions-accusations-involved-indigenous/>

Shelburne County man loses Metis hunting rights appeal

[Greg Bennett](#)

Published on March 12, 2015

HALIFAX -A Cape Sable Island man fighting for Metis hunting rights has lost an appeal of a case that has been before the court for almost 12 years.

In October 2003, Jack Hatfield shot a buck north of French Lake, Yarmouth County. He then brought the carcass to the Department of Natural Resources offices in Tusket, claiming that his Metis heritage allowed him to hunt outside of provincially-set hunting seasons.

The case navigated the court system for years until 2013, when he was found guilty of hunting without a license and illegally possessing a deer carcass and fined \$100.

An appeal of that decision was launched, and that ruling was upheld by the Nova Scotia Supreme Court on March 11.

In a written decision, Justice John D. Murphy agreed with Judge Robert Prince’s earlier ruling that Hatfield had not proven there was an identifiable Metis community on Cape Sable Island before effective European control and could not claim that his Aboriginal right is constitutionally protected.

Based on the evidence presented in the case, the judge ruled that 1670 was the date of effective European control in Nova Scotia, and concluded that the community Hatfield ties his heritage to didn’t arrive in Cape Sable Island until nearly 100 years later.

“My review of the evidence in this case reveals no testimony to suggest that Mr. Hatfield’s ancestors arrived in the Cape Sable Island area of Nova Scotia before 1760,” wrote Justice Murphy.

Direct Link: <http://www.thecoastguard.ca/News/Local/2015-03-12/article-4074489/Shelburne-County-man-loses-Metis-hunting-rights-appeal/1>

First Nation calls Yukon's draft fracking strategy 'a betrayal'

Trondek Hwechin First Nation opposes fracking, angry with Yukon government's documents on hydraulic fracturing

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 12, 2015 6:39 AM CT Last Updated: Mar 12, 2015 6:39 AM CT



The Dänojà Zho Cultural Centre, of the Trondek Hwechin First Nation. Trondek chief Roberta Joseph says the Yukon government has had "closed ears" when it comes to listening to her people and to Yukoners as a whole. (Trondekheritage.com)

The Trondek Hwechin First Nation says documents indicating that the Yukon government is pursuing a draft strategy for hydraulic fracturing represent a serious breach of trust.

A presentation by the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources that was intended for caucus recommends the government focus on fracking — notably in the Eagle Plain basin in northern Yukon, and the Liard basin in the southeast corner of the territory.

Chief Roberta Joseph says it was a blow to learn what the government was planning behind closed doors, especially considering that her First Nation, which is based in Dawson City, passed a resolution stating it was diametrically opposed to fracking.

"This brings a real lack of trust," says Joseph, "when these things are being planned out without even sitting down, talking to First Nations."

Joseph says elders were vehement in their opposition when they spoke to the [Yukon legislature's select committee on hydraulic fracturing](#). She says the government has decided to disregard not only First Nations, but Yukoners as a whole, and that revelations in the documents will damage an already brittle relationship between the territorial government and First Nations.

"The Yukon Party government basically has closed ears on Yukon people," she says, "in terms of how we want to ensure that we have a sustainable environment for future generations."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/first-nation-calls-yukon-s-draft-fracking-strategy-a-betrayal-1.2991492>

Special Topic: Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women

Missing and murdered indigenous women: Still looking for answers to a decades-old problem

By [Mia Sheldon](#) March 6, 2015 1:51 pm



There was a sense of optimism coupled with realism when Canadian federal ministers, premiers, chiefs and families of victims came together last week for a national roundtable discussion on missing and murdered indigenous women.

"Families are looking for action today to make sure they're supported in their time of need, making sure they're protected when they experience these violent crimes," said Federal Minister for the Status of Women, Kellie Leitch.

There was talk of action plans, creating a framework to raise awareness and plans to meet again next year, but no new money from the federal government and no inquiry. That left women, such as Bernadette Smith whose sister Claudette Osborne went missing in 2008, disappointed.

"No, I don't think she would be happy," Smith said of her sister. "I'm definitely not walking out of there saying 'Yippee!'"



Since 1980, almost 1,200 aboriginal women have gone missing or been murdered in Canada. Indigenous women make up 16 per cent of all female murder victims in Canada and almost 12 per cent of all missing people.

“If you equated that to non-indigenous women that would be 20,000 white women. And I think the army would be called out or something would be done,” Smith said.

Many indigenous women face poverty, addiction and abuse.

Over the last year, talk around the issue has been re-ignited, after the high profile murder of 15-year old Tina Fontaine in Winnipeg.

“I hope her death isn’t in vain,” said Tina’s great aunt Thelma Favel. “I hope people open their eyes.”

What action should be done depends on who is doing the talking. Some want an inquiry; others want more money for prevention programs, others just want acknowledgment that women are being killed.

“What does an inquiry do? It’s just all talk again and people writing things on paper,” said Favel. “Paper is easily thrown away.”

“Why are indigenous women and girls treated and viewed differently?” asked National Chief Perry Bellegarde. Bellegarde attended the national roundtable.



“The outcome from today was of course the framework was adopted. And again the framework we talked about deals with the three areas about prevention and awareness,” said Bellegarde.

National Chief Bellegarde called the roundtable the first step in working towards a solution. “We’re still moving towards the call for a federal inquiry.”

The federal government refuses to have an inquiry, but has promised \$25 million over the next five years to address the issue. But Bernadette Smith said that, given the scope of the issue, it isn’t enough for one province, let alone Canada.

“And when you’re looking at 33 First Nation communities in Manitoba alone and you divide that you know \$5 million over one year you can’t even build a house,” Smith said.

16×9’s “The Missing and the Murdered” airs this Saturday at 7pm.

Direct Link: http://globalnews.ca/news/1868157/missing-and-murdered-indigenous-women-still-looking-for-answers-to-a-decades-old-problem/?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter

Canada has committed a 'grave violation' of aboriginal women's rights: UN

QMI Agency

First posted: Friday, March 06, 2015 04:38 PM EST



People demonstrate during a vigil honouring women from around the world to raise awareness about the Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women movement and the Shine A Light campaign at Trent University in Peterborough, Ont., March 4, 2015. (CLIFFORD SKARSTEDT/QMI Agency)

A United Nations committee has joined the call for Canada to conduct an inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women.

"The Canadian police and justice system have failed to effectively protect aboriginal women, hold offenders to account and ensure that victims get redress," the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) says in a report released Friday.

"Aboriginal women and girls are more likely to be victims of violence than men or non-aboriginal women, and they are more likely to die as a result," CEDAW members Niklas Bruun and Barbara Bailey said.

Bruun and Bailey came to Canada in September 2013 to conduct a "confidential inquiry" into the issue, meeting with law enforcement, MPs, representatives of the aboriginal community, women's rights groups and 40 relatives of missing and murdered women.

They cite data collected by non-governmental organizations, which document 662 cases of aboriginal women and girls who went missing or were murdered in Canada since the 1960s.

The RCMP's own statistics are even more grim: between 1980 and 2012 there were 1,017 aboriginal women murdered, and another 164 remain missing, the force said in a report last May.

Canada has committed a "grave violation" of the rights of aboriginal women, the UN report says.

The federal government has been reluctant to launch such an inquiry, saying the causes of the problem are well-known from several previous studies and reports, and that an inquiry would only delay further action.

Amnesty International, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and opposition MPs and senators are among those who have called for a national inquiry.

Direct Link: <http://www.torontosun.com/2015/03/06/canada-failed-to-protect-aboriginal-women-un-committee-says>

International Women's Day: Indigenous women still not equal in Canada

By Pamela Palmater, [for CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 07, 2015 6:00 AM ET Last Updated: Mar 07, 2015 6:00 AM ET



Photos of missing and murdered indigenous women at the national round table in Ottawa February 27. (Karina Roman/CBC)

CBC News will continue to investigate missing and murdered indigenous women and girls by exploring the stories of these women, their families and their communities.

On Friday another damning report was released that concluded Canada committed “grave violations” of the human rights of indigenous women and girls across the country. The report also recommended a national inquiry.

“Aboriginal women and girls are more likely to be victims of violence than men or non-aboriginal women, and they are more likely to die as a result,” said Niklas Bruun and Barbara Bailey, members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

“Yet, despite the seriousness of the situation, the Canadian State has not sufficiently implemented measures to ensure that cases of missing and murdered aboriginal women are effectively investigated and prosecuted.”

At least 1,200 indigenous women and girls have gone murdered and missing in the past three decades. How did we come to this state of affairs in Canada?

How could the senseless and unfortunate murder of one soldier on Parliament attract Harper’s empathy, compassion and conviction to prevent another senseless death, but 1,200 horrific murders and missing indigenous women and little girls do not rank “high on our radar”?

Unequal value ingrained in Canada's history

The unequal value placed on one man’s life versus hundreds of indigenous women’s lives require a closer examination of our history and how this sort of blatant racism came to be ingrained in every level of our government.

‘Under the Indian Act, indigenous women were confined to reserves, stripped of their political and legal powers, and excluded from residing with their communities if they married out.’- *Pamela Palmater*

The acquisition of the lands and resources in Canada were not all acquired through peace-making in treaties. The dispossession of Indigenous Nations came about, in part, through the violent oppression of indigenous women. In 1749, scalping bounties were placed on the heads of Mi’kmaw men, women and children — and represented the first state-sanctioned cases of murdered and missing indigenous women.

Under the Indian Act, indigenous women were confined to reserves, stripped of their political and legal powers, and excluded from residing with their communities if they married out. Canada’s policy to “sever her connection wholly with the reserve” was a way to ensure the “gradual assimilation” of Indians.

However, all of Canada’s policies were not so gradual in their effect. During the 1900’s, thousands of indigenous women and little girls were forcibly sterilized without their knowledge and consent. Ironically this was thanks in part to Nellie McClung and Emily Murphy of the “Famous Five” — who won their legal challenge in 1928 to have women declared “persons” under the law. McClung and Murphy publicly advocated racist ideologies related to cleansing the human race of “inferior” people – like indigenous peoples.

During the residential school era, thousands of indigenous girls were subjected to rape, torture and physical abuse in residential schools. These were not isolated or anomalous incidents, like in the case of one random serial rapist/killer, but represented the whole scale of violent, sexual and physical oppression of indigenous girls.

These little girls could not call out for help. If they tried to run away or tell the RCMP, the RCMP did not help them, but instead dragged them back to the residential schools.

Little has changed

Today, when Indigenous women and girls call the RCMP for help – the call often goes unanswered or little effort is exerted to search for the missing or investigate the murdered. [The Robert Pickton inquiry highlighted these gross failures.](#)

What's worse is that state actors, like judges and law enforcement, have themselves taken part in the violence. [Former provincial court judge David Ramsay plead guilty](#) to sexual and physical assault on indigenous girls as young as 12 years old.

RCMP Const. Kevin Theriault only lost seven days pay for arresting an intoxicated indigenous woman and taking her out of jail and back to his house to engage in relations with her all while his colleagues and supervisor goaded him on. The Human Rights Watch report which has documented many accounts of indigenous women who have been beaten and raped by RCMP officers seems to suggest these are not isolated incidents.

The kidnap and murder of Helen Betty Osborne in The Pas and the failure of the RCMP to properly investigate the case, and the wrongful imprisonment of Donald Marshall Junior, led to justice inquiries which revealed the real problem in Canada:

1. The long history of discriminatory Canadian laws and policies which disadvantage indigenous women and girls and make them vulnerable
2. The overt and systemic racism against indigenous peoples in every level of Canada's justice system.

Canada has ignored more than 50 studies which have made more than 700 recommendations on how to address murdered and missing indigenous women and girls. The majority of Canadians, First Nations, provinces and territories and the United Nations have all called for a national inquiry and an emergency action plan.

This Sunday, March 8 is International Women's Day. The theme this year: "Empowering Women: Empowering Humanity." We collectively have an opportunity to make Canada a better place for all women and girls by letting the families of the murdered and missing have justice.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/international-women-s-day-indigenous-women-still-not-equal-in-canada-1.2985100>

Indigenous men dealing with violence want more resources in Quebec

By Caroline Nepton, [CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 10, 2015 5:00 AM ET Last Updated: Mar 10, 2015 5:00 AM ET



Martin Hervieux, Innu of Pessamit, is part of the Napeuat (men's) Committee and is among a small but growing number of men involved in efforts to address family violence in Quebec's aboriginal communities. (Caroline Nepton)

Martin Hervieux, an Innu man from Pessamit, Quebec, wishes resources would have existed for his father decades ago when his violent behaviour dominated their family life.

"I would have liked it if a house for men had been accessible to my father when I was young. He was beating my mom," said Hervieux, 59. "Also, I could have used help later in my life."

Hervieux is now part of the Napeuat (men's) Committee and is among a small but growing number of men involved in efforts to address family violence in Quebec's aboriginal communities.

When the Napeuat Committee decided three years ago it was time to build an indigenous men's shelter, to provide a haven and support for violent men, they turned to the Women's Shelter Network for guidance.

During their initial encounters, Hervieux admits, "we were scared."

The Napeuat Committee members were outnumbered by "14 women, including, I believe, four radical feminists," he said. "We told our personal stories and explained our project. Then, the most radical of them asked us to be part of their network."

"We said 'yes' right away."

Hervieux lived violence, discrimination and racism

"We did not go to residential school but nuns in the village taught us we were bad. I was not even 10 years old," he remembers.

"There was always alcohol in the village coming on the river or through the woods. I started drinking at 13, got arrested and beaten by the RCMP officers. All the family was

drinking...One day, I had really too much to drink. I woke up in the morning and my father was dead. I do not remember anything. I was sentenced to seven years in the penitentiary.”

“Men have learned to be strong but they need to learn not to be ashamed to get help.”-
Sheila Swasson

When he was released, Hervieux had nowhere to go. He wound up in Montreal, homeless.

“I was an alcoholic, and a cocaine junkie. I had just my shoes and the clothes on my back. But I had one thing. I had the heart to stop.”

Now sober for the past 22 years, Martin Hervieux is one of few men to be involved in the aboriginal women’s movement. “It is worth it. I learn a lot from them.”

Punitive system for aboriginal men

But Quebec has the dubious distinction of lagging far behind other provinces and territories, in terms of providing services to aboriginal men; this, according to criminologist and professor Renée Brassard from Laval University. “We are in a punitive system,” she says, “no crime, no services for men.”

Brassard will publish a new study in spring 2015. She and her research team met with several First Nations and Inuit men of Quebec in prison.

“We found that many men were intoxicated during the crime and often their spouse was also extremely violent and under the influence of different substances. Also, many do not know who started the fight and mentioned that they were often victims of jealousy and violence from their partner.”

If there’s a shortage of resources for aboriginal men involved in domestic abuse, there’s also a lack of hard data.



The Listiguj Wellness Fair of 2014, for men and women, was organized by the Haven house. (Haven House)

Under the supervision of Brassard, Lisa Ellington published a Master's thesis in the sociology department of Université Laval. It demonstrates that most of our statistics on violence are collected with and about women.

"We do not know much about how aboriginal men perceive violence, how they react, etc," says Brassard.

Through her research Ellington points out that domestic violence is financially and socially expensive. Over the last 10 years, it has been the most common problem shared by First Peoples in all regions.

Sheila Swasson is a founding member of the National Aboriginal Circle Against Family Violence and a long time advocate of the Mi'gmaq community of Listiguj. She is not surprised by the results.

"Men have learned to be strong," she says, "but they need to learn not to be ashamed to get help." She points to the consequences of assimilation and the inter-generational effects of residential schools in Canada.

"They were often abused at a young age. Sometimes our people normalize violence."

Inviting men to be part of movement

Early in their involvement, aboriginal women were the first to ask the feminist organizations of Quebec to invite men in activities to stop family violence, remembers Michelle Audette, president of Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC).

“When the Federation des femmes du Québec (Quebec Women’s Federation) asked us to be part of their walk for International Women’s Day in 2000 we said 'yes' but only if men were involved.”

At first, the Quebec women’s movement refused but they changed their minds, Audette explains.

Sheila Swasson, who’s also in charge of Listiguj women’s shelter, Haven House, is modifying services to be more holistic and include men and youth centres.

But more needs to be done. In Kuujjuaq, Nunavik, there is the Tungasuvvik women's shelter. Annie Olivier is a psychoeducator and was a consultant for the shelter.

“There’s a shortage of housing in Nunavik and with children involved, after their treatment, women go back with their male partner. We need a men’s shelter,” she said.

Hervieux has seen cuts to social services made by the current liberal government of Quebec.

He hopes that his initiatives like the White Ribbon campaign, to get men involved in healthy relationships, might bring awareness to people making decisions.

“When I share my story, even today, it helps me heal.”

For Hervieux the fight to get a shelter and services is not finished.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/indigenous-men-dealing-with-violence-want-more-resources-in-quebec-1.2987344>

Red dresses to bring awareness to issue of missing, murdered aboriginal women

By: The Canadian Press

Posted: 03/11/2015 3:41 PM

PRINCE ALBERT, Sask. - Organizers of a Saskatchewan campaign are using red dresses to bring awareness to missing and murdered aboriginal woman.

The dresses are being hung in the city of Prince Albert and along the road to the northern community of La Ronge.

Organizer Marie Genereaux (JEHN'-ur-oh) says the dresses represent, in her words, “our lost sisters.”

She says the issue hits her particularly hard because she, too, is aboriginal.

Elder Julie Pitzel says a lot of women are concerned about missing and murdered indigenous women and express it in different ways.

The RCMP released a report last year that said almost 1,200 aboriginal women were murdered or disappeared in Canada between 1980 and 2012.

“One of the things I have deep feelings about is murdered women, what happens to them, how they’re hurt, how they’re not part of their families anymore, their children,” Pitzel said.

Pitzel discussed the issue and the red dress campaign with Prince Albert police Chief Troy Cooper.

“We know that a lot of people in this community have lost loved ones recently and we have to think about all of those young women who have lost their lives,” she said.

One of the red dresses is being hung outside the police station.

“We have a huge aboriginal population here, so just by living in (Prince Albert) it’s important to us ... Some of us are connected personally to issues, some of us are connected through our employment and some through our culture,” Cooper said.

“To be born with a risk factor just simply because you’re aboriginal and because you’re a female ... that’s unacceptable,” he said. “Every time we have an opportunity to remind people of that, to bring that conversation to the forefront we have to take that opportunity.”

Special Topic: <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/canada/red-dresses-to-bring-awareness-to-issue-of-missing-murdered-aboriginal-women-295967071.html>

Special Topic: International Indigenous Populations

World run on turquoise gives some Native American artisans the blues

Little silver lining for those who work with culturally important stone as they see demand go up and supply go down

March 6, 2015 5:00AM ET

by [Carrie Jung @Jung Carrie](#)



Only a handful of mines in the United States still produce turquoise, a culturally significant stone for the Navajo. Carrie Jung

SANTA FE, N.M. — For Navajo silversmith Rodey Guerro, making jewelry is more than just a source of income — it's part of his way of life.

"I've been at this for over 47 years," he said. "I got started in the early '70s and I'm still at it."

On most weekends you can find Guerro in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Today he's one of about 40 Native artisans selling their work along the central plaza sidewalk.

Guerro's inventory is arranged neatly on a purple felt blanket. Smaller pieces such as earrings line the bottom half of his vending display, with larger items like pendants and bolo ties dotting the top. While Guerro uses a variety of materials in his work, it's the turquoise that commands the most attention from customers.

"This is inlaid with different types of turquoise from Arizona and Nevada," he explained to a couple eyeing one of his bracelets. "And here's a little abstract dragonfly that I put in there."

Guerro is asking \$3,500 for the bracelet, a much higher price than he would have asked just a few years ago. He said several things impact the price of his work, especially raw materials. Right now, though, it's the cost of natural turquoise.

The cost of turquoise has been steadily increasing for the last 60 years, but recently prices for the gem have skyrocketed. Growing demand for turquoise jewelry from Europe and Asia is partly to blame for the shift. The stone is also becoming harder to find and mine.



Jeffrey Lewis displays two types of turquoise from the Sleeping Beauty mine in New Mexico. In his right hand, enhanced turquoise, and in his left hand, natural turquoise. Carrie Jung

Geologically speaking, turquoise is a nonrenewable resource, one that took millions of years to form. For those who use the stone to make a living, adaptation seems to be the name of the game for now. But with only a handful of mines still producing, the natural stone's place in the cultures in the Southwest faces an uncertain future.

While the increased scarcity means consumers and artists alike have had to adapt, reaction has been varied throughout the complex market.

Industry experts say the craze that led to this dramatic environment change was first noticed around 2010. "Something that five or six years ago was \$200 a pound" is now a couple thousand a pound, said Jeffrey Lewis, owner of Trade Roots, an international procurer of wholesale raw materials for Native American artisans.

Lewis added that while demand for turquoise jewelry has increased steadily across Europe, it's the demand from China's expanding middle class that's really driving the spike.

"When you've got such a huge population moving into middle class wanting things, especially cultural things, it just creates a huge demand," he said.



Most turquoise on the market is stabilized, meaning that it is too soft to use in its natural state and must be stabilized with epoxy before use. Carrie Jung

In today's market, much of a stone's value can be derived from the mine it came from. Lewis said his Chinese buyers tend to prefer turquoise with solid sky-blue coloring, qualities that are typical of stones from the Sleeping Beauty mine in Globe, Arizona. Like many of the once prolific mines in the Southwest, Sleeping Beauty is now closed to turquoise miners.

Only a handful of mines in the U.S. still produce turquoise, but the supply of this gem is limited by yet another factor. Of all the turquoise that comes out of the ground, industry experts estimate that only about 3 to 4 percent is hard enough in its natural form to be used in jewelry.

"It's difficult for the artists to buy," said Cheryl Ingram, owner of Silver Sun Gallery in Santa Fe and a member of the [Indian Arts and Crafts Association](#). "We have to find it in private collections, estates and that sort of thing."

Ingram said that scarcity means higher prices for the consumer, which can make it harder to sell.

"Turquoise, which used to be a very inexpensive stone here half a century ago, is now very collectible, and it's only going in one direction," said Ingram.



Jewelry maker Rodey Guerro with some of his creations on the central plaza sidewalk in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Carrie Jung

But, she added, true collectors understand that, and most will be willing to pay for the best rocks no matter what the price is. This type of market has manifested itself in several ways for the Native artisans who work with turquoise to make a living.

“If you’re good, there will be buyers,” said Ingram. She explained that the best artists can raise their prices with the cost of their raw materials and still have a customer base willing to pay.

But not every artist has clientele with an unlimited budget. Many are keeping their prices in check by using more silver in their work, like Cochiti/Zuni silversmith Robert Eustace Jones.

“I’ve adapted,” he said. “Now I use my stones very sparingly.”

Thanks to falling silver prices, Jones said, he can still make pieces he’s proud of without raising his prices too much, but it does come at a personal cost.

“It’s impacted my personal creativity,” he said. “I have a lot of great ideas, and I can no longer make those designs because I don’t have the material to make them.”

But not every artist has taken that approach.

“Most of them can’t afford that level of [natural] turquoise today. And slowly that level of market has gone to stabilized,” explained Lewis



Only 3 to 4 percent of the turquoise that comes out of mines is hard enough to be processed for jewelry and other uses. Carrie Jung

[Stabilized turquoise](#) makes up more than 95 percent of the turquoise on the market. Unlike natural turquoise, stabilized turquoise starts out too soft to be manipulated into jewelry. Those who use it must treat it, or stabilize it, with epoxy before working with it.

For the untrained eye, it can be hard to tell the difference between natural and stabilized turquoise. From a market perspective, Lewis said, there’s nothing wrong with using it, but because the product is of lesser quality, it needs to be disclosed to buyers.

“I think this Southwestern region has a significant number of jewelers who work professionally or work with collaborators and really provide for their families with the

use of their art,” said Dallin Maybee, chief operating officer for the [Southwestern Association for Indian Arts](#). He explained that while demand for turquoise is growing worldwide, it’s a major part of the cultural identity in the Southwest. And for many Native artisans in the region, it’s also an important source of income.

The exact size of the Native arts and crafts industry is unclear and remains very hard to track, as many of the transactions tend to be done in cash or other forms of trade.

A recent survey conducted by the Indian Arts and Crafts Association suggests that nationwide, it could be generating as much as \$150 million a year, though association officials maintain that even that is a very rough estimate. As far as the market impact goes, various tribal craft organizations, such as the Zuni Pueblo, say the increasing cost of turquoise is cutting into their artists’ bottom line.



Turquoise is not just worn but also used in ceremonies, says Mae Peshlakai, a Navajo silversmith. Carrie Jung

But industry size aside, Maybee said, maintaining a robust arts and crafts industry comes with certain benefits for tribal members.

“With a jewelry studio, you can do that anywhere,” he said. “They don’t have to leave to make a living.” Maybee explained that the ability to work from home allows artists to stay close to their community and keep their cultural ties and identity strong. “That sense of community happens there, with that connection to that land,” he said.

But while turquoise can play a significant economic role in many Southwestern tribal cultures today, the connection to the stone itself goes even deeper for the Navajo people.

“We have four sacred stones, and the No. 1 is turquoise,” explained Navajo silversmith Mae Peshlakai.

For the Navajo, the stone is not just worn. It's also used in ceremonies and to make offerings. Peshlakai added that, for many, it's a reminder to keep life in balance.

"It's your connection to Mother Earth and Father Sky and living in harmony with everything that exists in between," she said.

Direct Link: <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/3/6/international-run-on-turquoise-gives-native-american-artisans-the-blues.html>

Newly Recognised Indigenous Rights a Dead Letter?

By [Edgardo Ayala](#) and [Claudia Ávalos](#) [Reprint](#)



Tito Kilizapa in his workshop in Izalco in western El Salvador. The 74-year-old indigenous craftsman makes and plays the marimba, a percussion instrument that was popular in Central America in the 19th century and which he is trying to revive among children in the area. Credit: Edgardo Ayala/IPS

IZALCO, El Salvador , Mar 5 2015 (IPS) - Nearly three years after the rights of El Salvador's indigenous people were recognised in the constitution, there are still no public policies and laws to translate that historic achievement into reality.

In June 2014 the single-chamber legislature ratified a constitutional reform [passed in April 2012](#) which acknowledged new rights of native peoples in this Central American nation. But the leaders of indigenous communities and organisations told IPS they were worried it would all remain on paper.

“There have been changes full of good intentions, but the good intentions need a little orientation,” Betty Pérez, the head of the [Salvadoran National Indigenous Coordinating Council](#) (CCNIS), told Tierramérica.

The reform of article 63 of the constitution states that “El Salvador recognises indigenous peoples and will adopt policies aimed at maintaining and developing their ethnic and cultural identity, worldview, values and spirituality.”

These cover a wide range of areas, such as respect for indigenous peoples’ medicinal practices and their collective rights to land. And according to lawmakers of different stripes, the constitutional amendment pays a historic debt to the country’s native people and helps pull them out of the invisibility to which they had been condemned.

Pérez said a process of dialogue is underway between indigenous organisations and communities and the different government ministries involved, with a view to designing public policies, but that little headway has been made because “there is no unified vision and each group is following its own logic.”

“If the reform does not establish mechanisms to give it life, if the legislators do not approve the necessary secondary laws, it’s going to be left as dead letter in the constitution.” -- Supreme Court Justice Florentín Meléndez

The CCNIS is pressing for the country to ratify the International Labour Organisation’s (ILO) [Convention 169](#) concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries. But no date has been set for the legislature to ratify the legal instrument, which protects indigenous rights.

Pérez spoke with IPS during the commemoration of the 1932 indigenous uprising, held in this municipality of 74,000 people 65 km west of San Salvador, which was the epicentre of the revolt.

The rebellion in Izalco, demanding better conditions for native people, was brutally repressed by the dictatorship of Maximiliano Martínez (1931-1944), leaving between 30,000 and 40,000 dead.

El Salvador’s indigenous people were ignored and invisible for decades, under the argument that after the massacre, they blended in with the ‘mestiza’ or mixed-race population, abandoning their languages and traditional dress, to avoid persecution under successive military regimes, which accused them of being communists.

For that reason there is little documentation or up-to-date figures on their socioeconomic circumstances in this impoverished country of 6.3 million people.

According to the [Perfil de los Pueblos Indígenas de El Salvador](#), a report on the country's indigenous people available only in Spanish and jointly produced by the World Bank, the Salvadoran government and indigenous organisations, approximately 10 percent of the country's population is Amerindian, divided into three major groups: the Nahua/Pipil in the centre and west of the country; the Lenca in the east; and the Cacaopera in the north.

The study, published in 2003, reports that most of the country's native people depend on subsistence agriculture on leased land, while others work as hired rural labour. A large number of communities also make and sell traditional crafts.

Native organisations and experts say that implementing or applying the constitutional amendment requires the adoption of an integral policy with an inclusive focus and respect for the world vision of each native group, in education, health, environment, labour, community development, and land titling.

The health system, for example, must have an “intercultural” focus making it possible for native people to receive adequate health services that are respectful of their culture, said a 2013 report by then United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples [James Anaya](#), who visited the country in 2012.

That kind of focus would make it possible to recognise traditional practices such as the healing carried out by 88-year-old Rosalío Turush in Izalco – known as Itzalku in the Náhuat language.

The elderly native healer learned to use herbs from her ancestors, and to ease pain with massage in the case of broken bones or sprains.

“Back then, since medicine was hard to come by, people turned to plants,” Turush told *Tierramérica*. “For example, to cure dysentery, there is a plant called ‘trencillo’.”

“Now people mainly come for me to give them a massage to relieve a pulled muscle, a broken bone, because I’ve still got the touch,” she added.

In order to put the constitutional reform into practice, “secondary laws” to regulate the new rights must be passed. But almost no progress in this direction has been made in the legislature.

“If the reform does not establish mechanisms to give it life, if the legislators do not approve the necessary secondary laws, it’s going to be left as dead letter in the constitution,” said Supreme Court Justice Florentín Meléndez during the commemoration of the massacre here in Izalco.

Meléndez also referred to the touchy issue of indigenous communities' access to collective land ownership – which was already in the constitution but was never regulated to put it into practice.

“Communal property is already recognised, the only thing that is needed is for the lawmakers to continue moving towards concrete fulfillment of those rights, not just on paper but in real life,” he added.

In the late 19th century, the communal land of the country's indigenous peoples was taken from them by coffee plantation owners.

The landowners turned tens of thousands of indigenous people and peasant farmers into casual labourers who lived in the most abject poverty on the coffee plantations, sowing the seed of social discontent which, decades later, was one of the causes of the [1980-1992 civil war](#) that left 80,000 people – mainly civilians – dead.

The 1932 uprising also protested the theft of indigenous land.

“That's where the 1932 massacre came from, because the landowners, if someone didn't sell them their land, stole it at gunpoint,” Tito Kilizapa, a 74-year-old indigenous craftsman and musician from Izalpo, told Tierramérica.

Pérez, with the CCNIS, pointed out that the constitutional reform was delayed for a decade because of opposition from powerful economic groups, which feared the expropriation of communal land taken from indigenous communities in the 19th century, or other measures that would hurt their own interests.

These groups are also trying to block the approval of the secondary laws needed to implement the constitutional amendment, especially with respect to indigenous access to land.

“We are immersed in a capitalist system, we have groups of power...there are economic and political elements that keep the government from carrying out these processes of change,” Pérez said.

Gustavo Pineda, national director of indigenous affairs in the Secretariat of Culture, told Tierramérica that “these are all processes; changing the situation for indigenous peoples is a long, uphill process.”

The government official said “native peoples have been systematically neglected and ignored for a long time – we're talking about centuries.”

This story was originally published by Latin American newspapers that are part of the Tierramérica network.

Direct Link: <http://www.ipsnews.net/2015/03/newly-recognised-indigenous-rights-a-dead-letter/>

At Last, Violence Against Women Act Lets Tribes Prosecute Non-Native Domestic Abusers

Posted: 03/06/2015 5:52 pm EST Updated: 03/06/2015 6:59 pm EST



WASHINGTON -- Two years after Congress reauthorized the Violence Against Women Act, Native American tribes can finally take advantage of one of the law's most significant updates: a provision that allows tribal courts to investigate and prosecute non-Native men who abuse Native women on reservations.

Starting Saturday, tribes can claim jurisdiction over non-Native men who commit crimes of domestic violence, dating violence or who violate a protection order against a victim who lives on tribal land. Until now, that jurisdiction has fallen to federal or state law enforcement, who are often hours away from reservations and lack the resources to respond. The result has effectively allowed non-Native abusers immunity from punishment.

For the first time, tribal law enforcement will now have the ability to intervene.

"I want to encourage all tribal governments to get this law on their books," said Juana Majel of the National Congress of American Indians. "On most reservations, there are a handful of bad actors who have figured out how to slip between jurisdictional boundaries. They need to get the message. If they continue to assault our women, we will prosecute and put them in jail."

There are epidemic levels of domestic violence on tribal lands. Three out of five Native women have been assaulted in their lifetimes, and 34 percent will be raped, according to

the National Congress of American Indians. Getting to the heart of the VAWA provision, 59 percent of assaults against Native women take place at or near a private residence, and, as of 2010, 59 percent of Native women were married to non-Native men.

On some reservations, Native women are murdered at a rate more than 10 times the national average.

House Republicans [nearly torpedoed the entire VAWA bill in 2013](#) because they opposed the new protections for Native victims of abuse. Vice President Joe Biden, an original Senate sponsor of the 1994 law, stepped in and negotiated directly with then-House Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-Va.). Congress [ultimately reauthorized VAWA](#), but with Democrats providing the bulk of votes for it.

Three tribes have already been granted the new jurisdiction as part of a 2014 pilot project authorized by VAWA. Those tribes -- the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Pascua Yaqui Tribe, and the Tulalip Tribes -- had to submit applications laying out their proposed codes and procedures, and were approved by the U.S. attorney general. To date, they have charged a total of 26 offenders.

As of Saturday, tribal courts may take advantage of the new authority with only the approval of their tribal council. The courts must provide people with the same rights guaranteed under the U.S. Constitution.

"This is a major step forward to protect the safety of Native people, and we thank all members of Congress for passing the Violence Against Women Act of 2013 and recognizing tribal authority," said Brian Cladoosby, president of the National Congress of American Indians.

In related news, Acting Associate Attorney General Stuart Delery on Friday gave the green light to two tribes to move forward immediately with the new jurisdiction. The Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes of the Fort Peck Indian Reservation, and the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate of the Lake Traverse Reservation, are both large tribes in rural areas with larger populations, which means they can be a model for other large rural tribes interested in rolling out the new authority.

Direct Link: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/03/06/vawa-native-americans_n_6819526.html

Bill To Protect Russell Means' Legacy Before Senate

By [Associated Press](#) March 7, 2015

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota “Right of Publicity” bill designed to protect the legacy of the late Native American activist Russell Means needs a Senate vote in the final week of the legislative session if it is to become law.

The measure, backed by Republican Rep. Elizabeth May, of Kyle, would prohibit the unauthorized commercial use of a personality’s right of publicity and allow for the collection of damages if a person’s public persona were used to make money without authorization.

May drafted the legislation, she said, because Pearl Means wants to build a museum to honor her late husband, American Indian Movement leader Russell Means.

For that to happen, May said, the state has to have a right of publicity law in place, protecting things like a personality’s name, voice, and likeness from being used in the commercial setting without that person’s permission, South Dakota Public Broadcasting () reported.

Russell Means was an activist and leader within the American Indian Movement, a group whose fight for Native American rights drew national attention throughout the 1970s. Means became an actor later in life, appearing in films such as “Last of the Mohicans” and “Natural Born Killers.” He died in 2012 at age 72.

“It not only is going to protect Mr. Means’s legacy, but it’s also going to protect his family,” May said. “This is a perfect way to send a message that the legacy of Russell Means, whether you agreed or disagreed with him politically, he was a huge influence for the Native American people.”

The Senate meeting last week drew representatives from the Motion Picture Association, who support the measure, and people with organizations that represent national football, basketball and other player’s associations, who don’t support the bill.

Opponents said the measure doesn’t fully account for new technologies. Kevin Goering, a lawyer in New York City, said one particular section of the bill replaces every other law that has anything to do with the right of publicity.

Goering said the South Dakota bill could have national implications.

“It’s important because these statutes, one by one, add to the nationwide pattern of the right of publicity and how it is enacted state by state,” Goering says.

The full House and a Senate committee have passed the measure, but consideration in the full Senate was deferred to next week, the final week of the 2015 legislative session.

Information from: KUSD-FM,

Direct Link: <http://volanteonline.com/2015/03/bill-to-protect-russell-means-legacy-before-senate/>

Jailed in Mexico: Thousands of Indigenous Behind Bars Due to Language Barriers

[Rick Kearns](#)

3/8/15

There are more than 8,000 indigenous people in prison in Mexico who do not know the charges against them due to a lack of bilingual personnel in the criminal justice system according to human rights activists who addressed this issue in a seminar in late February.

The Director of the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples (NCDIP), Nuvia Mayorga, hosted a seminar in Mexico City entitled "The Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the Inter-American System" aimed at training bilingual attorneys to work on defending and freeing imprisoned indigenous people, especially indigenous women.

In 2014 the NCDIP sent researchers across the country to interview indigenous prisoners and discovered that over 8,000 of them did not speak Spanish, did not receive help from a translator or bilingual attorney and that the majority of them did not know why they were in jail.

Mayorga pointed out that the indigenous prisoners were from the states of Oaxaca, Chiapas, Veracruz, Chihuahua, Guerrero and the Federal District (Mexico City), and her colleague Lia Limon, Undersecretary of the NCDIP, underscored the severity of the situations confronting the indigenous men and women.

"Any violation of human rights is serious, but when one is dealing with denying access to justice or due process to people who already are confronting social and cultural discrimination it is doubly grave," Limon asserted.

"Not only are they in a vulnerable position with constant violations of their rights, but that they end up being deprived of their liberty for the fact that they may not have had an adequate defense or simply that they did not understand the legal procedure due to not having a translator who can explain to them what are their fundamental rights," Limon said.

Mayorga added that currently there are only 28 bilingual public defenders in the judicial system in a country with 68 indigenous communities, 11 linguistic branches and 364 variations on those languages, making it "an enormous task" for the federal government.

She noted that in 2013, the NCDIP assisted in freeing 1,089 indigenous prisoners, and 1,693 indigenous people in 2014, all of them innocent of the charges leveled against them.

The seminar brought in close to 160 bilingual attorneys according to Mayorga.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/03/08/jailed-mexico-thousands-indigenous-behind-bars-due-language-barriers-159502>

What's Up With the Native American Subplot on *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt*?

By [Libby Hill](#)



Jane Krakowski as Jackie Lynn, a Native American from South Dakota.

Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt, Netflix's new series with a *30 Rock* sensibility, is the show of the moment. It premiered to glowing reviews last Friday, with critics largely agreeing: It was "[winning](#)," "[very funny](#)," and "[daftly effervescent](#)." But because the show is a delight to watch on so many levels, most reviews also swept one persistent plot point under the rug: Jacqueline Voorhees's odd, irrelevant, and ultimately offensive Native American past.

Here's the problem: In the third episode, the audience learns that Kimmy's boss, Voorhees, is secretly a Native American. This revelation would be one thing on its own, but Jacqueline is played by the very white, very blonde Jane Krakowski. The episode includes flashbacks to her adolescence, where Jacqueline (then called Jackie Lynn) is still played by Krakowski, with lip service played to her dyeing her hair blonde and getting blue contacts — but these are subtle details.

When addressed, the subplot is passingly called “[bizarre](#)” and “[inexplicable](#),” but most [critics](#) decide to leave all mention of it out — good *or* bad. At the panel for the show at this year’s Television Critics Association press tour, *Kimmy Schmidt* co-creator Robert Carlock explained the story line, but his argument reads like the rough equivalent of, *Well, I have Native American friends*: “We have a couple of writers on staff with Native American heritage [...] So we felt like we had a little room to go in that direction.” He further explains: “Wouldn’t that be a crazy A-to-Z for her to deal with that, and maybe reconcile with it, and re-embrace who she really is, ultimately.” Basically, he’s explaining, they wanted to give her a sympathetic background.

Carlock positions the decision as a narrative choice. But this specific backstory is most frustrating because it doesn’t serve a purpose, either narratively or comedically. There must be more compelling (and funnier!) ways to give Jacqueline a backstory that don’t require sloppily marginalizing a group of people who are already as marginalized as you can get. It’s especially disappointing because *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt* so deftly integrates race in other instances, mainly in the latter half of its first season. The most prominent example comes when Kimmy’s African-American roommate, Titus, gets a job that requires him to dress as a werewolf. The punch line: He discovers he gets better treatment from strangers while in a monster costume than he does as a black man. The point is sharp, and it works largely because Titus is the one pointing out the discrepancies. This is precisely what isn’t happening when it comes to the dynamic between Jackie Lynn and her parents.

It’s clear the show intends for the joke to be on Jacqueline, but this approach fails roughly half the time. Jacqueline learns directions from the traditions of the Four Winds that help her in her future as a rich white lady who has broken her GPS in a tantrum; Jacqueline triumphantly howls at the sky after deciding to re-embrace her heritage and attacking a high-schooler in an Indian costume. The caricatures are so over-the-top, the show is clearly aiming for self-awareness (one of the latter episodes includes a line about being upset that Hispanics play Native Americans on TV — meanwhile, the actor who plays Jacqueline’s father Virgil, Gil Birmingham, is of Comanche descent). But self-awareness is often the pop-culture equivalent of prefacing a comment with, “I’m not racist, but ...” — it doesn’t serve as instant absolution.

Think of it this way: Is there any other race Krakowski could have played without raising a substantial uproar? The fact is, no matter what Krakowski looks like, we are asked to believe the character is Native American, a device that only serves to add color to the backstory of a character played by a very white actress. If we take the show at its word, we are laughing at a Native American woman who felt so uncomfortable in her skin and in not being a member of the dominant culture, she sold her soul to look the way she thought she should. That’s not funny; it’s disturbing. Not just because the pressure to Anglicize exists for so many cultures in America today, but because of how this very country systematically stripped the Native American people not only of their culture, but of their lands, too, not so very long ago.

There is probably a way this story line could have worked, whether it would mean a different actress or a different tenor. Ultimately, *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt* is a comedy, and a very new comedy, at that. By necessity, much of the genre is about trial and error, attempting to push boundaries while also not overstepping. The fact is, most Americans don't think about Native Americans because most Americans don't have to think about Native Americans. They've been closed off from the vast majority of us, reduced to friendly stereotypes on television. What's most disheartening about this isn't that it exists, it's that apparently, nobody thought it would raise alarms at all.

Direct Link: <http://www.vulture.com/2015/03/unbreakable-kimmy-schmidt-native-american.html>

The medical marijuana business could save Native American reservations

[Jacqueline Keeler](#)

March 10, 2015



At the very first Tribal Marijuana Conference held last weekend in Tulalip, WA, the former chairman of the Moapa Paiute tribe, William Anderson, tall and dignified and walking with a cane, explained to me what brought him: “I was just laying in bed in pain. I couldn’t get up, I couldn’t get up to go to the bathroom or go to the kitchen because I was in so much pain.”

An infection in his foot had spread to his spine and deteriorated the bone, exposing nerves. Doctors replaced the bone with titanium steel. For two years, the infection, even with prescription creams and antibiotics, kept coming back. The Indian Health Service recommended amputation of his foot.

“I just prayed to the Great Creator, ‘Please, help me with my pain. Please, help me get up so I can function as a normal human being.’”

Then he remembered a documentary he had seen years earlier about medical marijuana, and how it was used by cancer patients for pain relief. He ordered a topical cannabis ointment, and when he applied it he felt immediate relief.

The conference brought together some 75 tribal representatives, along with hundreds from the state and federal level in addition to cannabis industry leaders on the Tulalip tribe's \$200 million resort and casino in Washington state. This was in response to a Department of Justice [memo](#) directing US attorneys nationwide not to prosecute federally-recognized tribes conducting marijuana-related businesses on reservation land—so long as they meet nine criteria, including the prevention of criminal elements from profiting from marijuana sales, and keeping cannabis products away from minors.

While most of the presentations at the conference addressed the legal, infrastructural, and financial concerns of running a marijuana business on the reservation, Anderson's story highlights the incredible medical needs faced by many tribal members.

Native Americans have the highest rates of high-risk drinking and suicide of any American ethnic group, according to research from the [NIH](#) and [CDC](#), respectively. In the past two decades, opioid deaths and cancer rates have continued to climb. On Anderson's reservation, tribal members' health had been harmed by a coal power plant that blew coal ash through their community; its waste ponds poisoning their ground water. They fought back and shut down the plant, but this story is all too common throughout "Indian Country;" Native American communities pay a heavy price, both in regards to environmental and public health, for US energy development.

Amanda Reiman, manager of marijuana law and policy at the Drug Policy Alliance, assured tribal leaders at the conference that cannabis could actually help Native American communities battling addiction. A recent [study](#) (paywall) found that marijuana acts not as a "gateway drug," as it is often characterized, but as a less harmful replacement for alcohol. In states that have legalized medical marijuana, the researchers found that the number of alcohol-related traffic fatalities per year decreased by as much as 11%. It is estimated that, in the United States, alcohol-related deaths total 88,000 per year. The statistics are even more dire for Native American communities: [nearly 11.7% of Native American deaths are alcohol-related](#), compared to 3.3% for all Americans.

[Another study](#) published just last year in *JAMA Internal Medicine* found that opioid mortality rates were lower by 25% in states that had legalized medical marijuana. Native Americans have seen opioid-related (prescription painkiller) deaths increase since 2000 to a rate that is 3 times that of African-Americans and Hispanics, [according to the CDC](#). Nationally, these drugs now kill more people than car crashes.

As the medical establishment has reigned in opioid over-prescription, patients who had become addicted to painkillers have increasingly turned to heroin—once associated with big cities, but now a booming trade in poorer, rural areas. Last week, the Saginaw Chippewa tribe in Michigan [banished](#) two tribal members for trafficking in heroin. On

Feb. 20, a couple from the Lummi tribe in Washington state were sentenced to prison for conspiracy to distribute heroin and methamphetamine.

“Heroin and methamphetamine trafficking has no place in any of our communities, least of all on tribal lands,” said acting US attorney for the Western district of Washington, Annette L. Hayes. “Last week I convened a heroin summit to focus community resources on battling what has become a growing epidemic of opioid abuse. I commend the work of our tribal partners, the Lummi, to lead in the effort to prevent heroin use and overdose deaths.”

Meanwhile, yet another [study](#) made headlines after finding marijuana to be 114 times less deadly than alcohol. Alcohol, followed by heroin and cocaine, was found to be the most dangerous recreational drug. Tobacco came in fourth, and cannabis a distant last.

With all the research and evidence regarding the safety and innocuousness of marijuana piling up, it is no wonder that the federal government has taken baby steps to revise its once harsh prohibition of the drug. For example, a US district judge in Sacramento, CA, heard the final arguments on Feb. 11 on a hearing regarding the constitutionality of the 1970 Controlled Substances Act that classified marijuana as a [Schedule 1 drug](#). This is the first reconsideration of the act’s claims that marijuana has “no accepted medical use”—a rather foolish assertion considering that that 23 states and the District of Columbia now permit the distribution and consumption of medical marijuana. She is expected to rule within the next week.

Still, many Native Americans, long used to fighting addiction in their communities, see the opportunity for the sale of marijuana on their lands as yet another Trojan horse delivered by the US government. They worry about its implementation.

Troy Eid, chair of president Obama’s Indian Law and Order Commission was cautious. “I think it is very good for tribes to look at and think about how they might want to influence changes in the federal law,” he said. “Having said that, there are no changes in federal law here. I can tell you as a former US attorney, the nine different criteria that they laid out are not sufficient to provide protections to tribes or tribal members, tribal citizens. So, you are really rolling the dice.”

For Native American communities, the issue of marijuana legalization represents both unique challenges and prospects for success. It hinges on careful negotiation with multiple federal agencies, from the DEA to the IRS. The unique relationship federally-recognized tribes have with the US as “domestic dependent nations”—a designation that recognizes both the inherent sovereignty of pre-existing indigenous nations, but also reflects the power of the US to limit the exercise of that sovereignty—is a careful dance that tribes have had to conduct with the most powerful nation in the world for decades; and this new opportunity may serve as a long-awaited chance to restructure that relationship, just as casino-gaming did a generation ago.

“This issue was a historic moment for the United States,” Robert Odawi Porter of Odawi Law PLLC, a former president of the Seneca Nation of New York, and one of the organizers of the conference explained to me, “and what the Justice Department did was to invite ‘Indian Country’ to have a historical moment. No different than any other major decision our ancestors have had to make. Tribal leaders are now going to have the same opportunity to think through whether legalizing marijuana was a good thing.”

The conference ended with tribal leaders agreeing to meet again in Las Vegas on Mar. 12 at the Reservation Economic Summit to vote on a charter for a new inter-tribal cannabis trade organization.

Douglas Berman, a presenter at the conference, and a professor of law at Ohio State University, noted, “There are relatively few industries with so many novel dimensions to it that haven’t already gotten commercialized to the point it is difficult for new players to enter.”

“I think tribes can be first to market here. I really do,” said Hilary Bricken, a cannabis attorney in Washington state, and another of the organizers of the conference. She urged tribes to consider entering the marijuana banking services industry. Although Bank of America has agreed to handle Washington state’s marijuana tax income, only small credit unions have taken on lending to legal, licensed marijuana businesses. A few tribes have gotten involved as payday lenders, but full realization of reservations as “off-shore banking” magnates on the mainland US has not yet occurred. A niche banking services market like marijuana could provide the impetus.

Les Parks, vice chairman of the Tulalip tribe’s board of directors, shared a [video](#) of a local Seattle television-news report on the medical marijuana extract CBD, which is used to relieve epileptic seizures and hold big dreams for tribes in the pharmaceutical industry. “We can lead this country in CBD drug development and be the next big pharmaceutical company,” he said.

A number of Native Americans came with cannabis company partners to the conference. William Anderson was one of them. He is working with Strainz, a medical cannabis products and services company.

“This cannot just be about making a quick buck, but about economic development and being more independent, not dependent on the government, which I don’t like but is unfortunately the reality for our people,” Anderson explained.

As a former tribal chairman, he’s had experience doing just that. Under his leadership, his tribe not only got rid of the coal plant, but opened the first solar plant on any reservation in the country, and has since been approved to build a second.

But in the end Anderson is a believer in the power of medical marijuana to help Native American people deal with chronic pain. “I’m really grateful to be here today, to just talk

and to shake hands with people,” he said. “This is what I want to bring to Indian people out there. To show that there are other ways to get help.”

Direct Link: <http://qz.com/357621/growing-legal-marijuana-is-a-game-changer-for-cash-strapped-native-american-reservations/>

Aboriginal land rights in Western Australia – timeline

The battle for land rights in WA has stretched from early resistance to European settlement through to the Whitlam-era push for self-determination and beyond



Noonkanbah in the Kimberley region of Western Australia, which was at the centre of battles for land rights in the region in the 1970s and 80s. Photograph: Diana Plater/AAP

[Calla Wahlquist](#)

Wednesday 11 March 2015 03.32 GMT Last modified on Wednesday 11 March 2015 03.57 GMT

1829 Settlement declared in Western Australia, making Aboriginal people subject to British law. Aboriginal resistance results in a series of raids and reprisal attacks, [particularly in the 1830s](#).

1905 Western Australia introduces the Aborigines Act, allowing the forcible removal of children and the corralling of Aboriginal people on to reserves and making the “[chief protector of Aborigines](#)” the legal guardian of every Aboriginal person in the state.

1967 A [national referendum is held](#) to remove discriminatory clauses in the Australian constitution which excluded Aboriginal people from the commonwealth’s obligation to legislate for the benefit of its citizens and excluded Aboriginal people from being counted in the population.

1969 The [equal wage decision](#) comes into force in the Australian cattle industry, foreshadowed by the mass eviction of Aboriginal people from pastoral stations in northern Australia.

1974 The Whitlam government establishes the Aboriginal Land Fund to allow Aboriginal corporations to acquire interests in and occupy land, as part of its “self-determination” policy. The year before all states, except Queensland, relinquished their special responsibilities for Aboriginal communities to the commonwealth.

1992 The Australian high court hands down the [Mabo v Queensland \(no.2\) decision](#) that rejects terra nullius and recognised the existence of native title in Australian common law. The decision is put into law in the Native Title Act 1993.

2014 The Australian government puts responsibility for funding essential services in Aboriginal communities back on the states. The Western Australian government responds by saying it could not afford to support all 274 remote communities in its state, and that up to 150 communities which were “not viable” faced “closure”.

Direct Link: <http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/mar/11/aboriginal-land-rights-in-western-australia-timeline>

'Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt' Has Two Native American Actors. It Needed Three

[ICTMN Staff](#)

3/11/15

In *The Jerk*, protagonist Navin Johnson, played by Steve Martin, introduces himself with the line "I was born a poor black child." And it's funny, because it's not true. A new TV sitcom is trying to play a Native-character-who's-obviously-not-Native for laughs, and is catching some heat for it.

Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt, a Netflix original series, debuted on Friday, March 6, to critical acclaim. Created by Tina Fey, the show is about a young woman (Kimmy, played by Ellie Kemper) who has escaped an apocalyptic religious cult and is starting her life anew in New York City.

The show has a Native American subplot (most seem to, these days), and this is where it runs into some trouble. Kimmy gets a job as a nanny, working for Jacqueline Voorhees, played by Jane Krakowski (last seen on Tina Fey's successful *30 Rock*). And Jacqueline has a secret: She's American Indian.

Oh, right—*spoiler alert*.

Jacqueline, so the back-story goes, left her people, culture, and parents—played by Comanche actor Gil Birmingham and Cherokee actress Sheri Foster—behind to become a white woman (she dyes her hair and begins wearing blue contacts) and pursue her dreams of being a well-off Manhattanite. To an extent, her story of reinvention mirrors the main plotline: Kimmy's efforts to live her life after escaping the cult. Yet if that's what's going on, there are problematic parallels: That being born Native is like being born into a cult, that "escaping" Native culture is necessary to get somewhere in life. Admittedly, that is an emotional reaction, but it's there.

[Writing for AV Club](#), Kalya Kumari Upadhyaya grants that the subplot isn't an inherently terrible idea—it's just terribly executed. "As a mixed race and often white-passing person myself, pretending to be white is a reality I'm all too familiar with," Upadhyaya writes. "But *Kimmy Schmidt* doesn't seem like the right show to tackle that. Or, more accurately, the very white Jane Krakowski doesn't seem like the right actor to tell this story. It's a whitewashed plot about whitewashing. And it just feels off. Krakowski should not be playing a Native American character, even one who has decided to pretend to be white."

At one point, a character (not Jacqueline) laments that one of the indignities thrust upon Native Americans is being played by Mexicans on TV. So... what does that line mean when the "Indian" in the room is played by Krakowski? Is the show's casting of Krakowski meant to be a joke in itself—and is this the show making a joke about its own joke?

Libby Hill, [writing for New York magazine's Vulture.com](#), is also baffled by Jacqueline's origins, musing that "There must be more compelling (and funnier!) ways to give Jacqueline a backstory that don't require sloppily marginalizing a group of people who are already as marginalized as you can get."

"Think of it this way," Hill continues. "Is there any other race Krakowski could have played without raising a substantial uproar? ... If we take the show at its word, we are laughing at a Native American woman who felt so uncomfortable in her skin and in not being a member of the dominant culture, she sold her soul to look the way she thought she should. That's not funny; it's disturbing. Not just because the pressure to Anglicize exists for so many cultures in America today, but because of how this very country systematically stripped the Native American people not only of their culture, but of their lands, too, not so very long ago."

Upadhyaya sees the Native storyline as a troubling way to make a simple point: "'Why does it matter where I'm from? It's where I'm going that counts,' Jacqueline asks. Sure, yes. That seems to be the character's central philosophy. But we probably could have gotten there in a different, less whitewashy way."

Here's another way we could have gotten there: Keep the Native American character, and hire a Native American actress, one who looks like she might share a single gene with pappy Gil Birmingham, to play her. Irene Bedard and Kimberly Norris Guerrero are contemporaries of Krakowski, either of them with dyed-blond hair would be funny—

funnier than a white woman playing a Native who is passing as white. When a character is passing as another race, the comedic question is *Who does she think she's fooling?* But instead of a joke within the narrative, any moderately intelligent viewer is more likely to feel like the show's creators are trying to pull a fast one: *Do they really expect us to believe she's Native American?*

Krakowski, though, is a selling-point of the show; she comes with the fairy dust of *30 Rock* and *Ally McBeal* on her. Tina Fey and company would sooner rewrite the character than replace her with a Native actress. So perhaps they should have rewritten the character. As much as we like—correction: we *love*—seeing Gil Birmingham and Sheri Foster in a sitcom, watching them pretend to be Jacqueline's biological family is unsettling, on more than one level.

As Libby Hill says in the conclusion of her Vulture article, "What's most disheartening about this isn't that it exists, it's that apparently, nobody thought it would raise alarms at all."

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/03/11/unbreakable-kimmy-schmidt-has-two-native-american-actors-it-needed-three-159559>